

Showcasing Your Personality

Contributed by Jasmine Star

By Jasmine Star

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Behind the Scenes:

- Jasmine wants to get invited to a high-end industry mixer. A place where air kisses are prevalent, and business cards are traded like the Lakers Playoff tickets—cautiously and with an air of entitlement.
- Jasmine doesn't get invited.
- Jasmine has a friend-of-a-friend who was invited but got sick and couldn't attend. At the last minute, tickets were passed Jasmine's way.
- Jasmine was excited.
- Jasmine enters the party, and drops her business card in a large carafe amongst the many other playoff tickets—oops, business cards
- Jasmine can sometimes be socially awkward, so she stands by the dessert table in the corner and stares at people.
- Jasmine leaves the party early for fear of being a sore thumb—and eating too many sweets.

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Four Months Later:

- Jasmine gets an email from an editor at Conde Nast's Brides Magazine stating how lovely the Jasmine Star Photography website is—the editor, apparently, pulled Jasmine's business card from the carafe sitting at the industry mixer.
- Jasmine responds with an elated Thank You and then apologizes if expressing appreciation could come across as vanity.
- The editor responds with this email: Jasmine,

Not vain at all. The site conveys everything I tell clients they need to address. It showcases your work, your personality is on every single page and at the same time, the focus is clearly on your clients. Seriously, 10 minutes on your site and a person feels like they know you, it is perfect. It is very hard to try and get most people to understand how critical a website is to their business. It is so refreshing to someone who truly 'gets it'.

Your work is great, your passion is palpable and I have to believe you are going to be wildly successful!

I've always known how important a website is. Well, because, it's a company's online presence for crying out loud. I get it. But what I failed to understand was the paramount importance of being unique on the web. How often do magazine editors visit photography websites only to discover that they all look the same? The layout, the features, the functionality are all the same—but the pictures are different.

I guarantee that if I had a website that wasn't customized, one-of-a-kind, and branded as my own, the editor would not have taken the time to write me.

It was then when I realized that in order for me to grow as an entrepreneur, I needed to be different. As an artist, I needed to create something that truly represented my business and who I was.

A few days ago, I gave a presentation to a college photography class and cited the Mixer Experience as a moment of enlightenment. A time in my life when I was all like, DUH! The amazing crew at Showit Sites offered a discount for the students should they want to build their own custom site. I thought taking this discount a step further would be in the best interest of PPR readers as well! You can download the program for free for a month to build your site and when you're ready to move forward, it'll only cost \$32 per month! Hollllla!

Upon order, just type in: jstar as the promo code and you'll get the discount!

I debated whether recounting this story online would make sense. Whether it would come across as Who does this girl think she is? Whether photographers would even care about creating a custom website. (And I also wondered whether I should dye my hair, but that was a random thought while writing this article). In the end, I thought I'd pass the discount along to PPR members because I think everyone should have the chance to create a division of their business to represent who they are.

Thanks for your time and I hope you're having a fabulous month!

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