

“From Rookie to Pro”

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Portrait Society of America conference, April 2008



IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR WORK

- “Likeness” is only the beginning.
- Constant reading: artists magazines, Portrait Society journal, all kinds of art books, Internet, portrait websites, online artists forums
- Focused visits to museums to study specific areas: skin tones, edges, texture, transparency, canvas, hands...
- Maximum easel time. Putting in the hours
- Workshops, PSoA conferences whenever possible
- Studying effects of light and color everywhere
- Painting from life whenever possible. *Plein air* work to study outdoor light and backgrounds and to improve speed.
- Learning to take great ref photos, an essential skill. Many subjects cannot sit for portraits exclusively from life. Can't create great portraits from bad sources. Photos taken by others: poor quality, copyrights
- Studying other artists' work: poses, lighting, clothes, backgrounds, sizes, pricing

BUSINESS PRACTICES

- You are a small business owner, running all departments: R&D, manufacturing, market research, accounting, sales.
- Feeling of urgency, making up for lost time, focus, self discipline
- Keeping a strict schedule
- Only had time to do two things well: take care of family, and art.
- Tracking work hours and what I did.
- Only did commissioned portraiture, not gallery work, not landscapes for sale
- Reading Entrepreneur magazine, improving productivity in various types of businesses. Learning financial forecasting, tracking A/R, project planning software, time management skills
- Customer relationships/customer service, “people buy from people they like”, encourages referrals
- Got busy: needed higher level of professional advice. Three years ago hired an art management consultant and studied his Art Marketing handbook
- Success led to productivity problem. Hired assistant, 18 hours a week. Does everything except hold the brush.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

- Needed a high quality portrait website: got commissions from site, use as online brochure. Gives credibility. Effective with search engines.
- Highest quality promo materials: great photos of paintings, no glare, good color. Letterhead, business cards, mailings, portfolio, website. Image of your business to communicate professionalism.
- Show your work to people most likely to buy, who can afford and need it. Executives retiring, affluent mothers with small kids.
- Join arts groups: ballet, symphony, art museum. Led to three portraits for CEO of Fortune 500 company and unveiling at major University.
- Work with news media. They need you. Get publicity: free portrait of high profile subject, have unveiling, learn to write great press releases, do interviews.
- Use publicity in promo materials. Screenshots from tv coverage on your website. Take photos of newspaper articles. Send out with your mailings.
- Get quotes. Client comments are your reviews. Use on all promo materials.
- Do unveiling events. Invite media. Make a speech. Take photos of you with subject and VIP's. Use on your website.
- Introduce yourself to VIP's at unveilings, other events. Don't be shy. Stay in touch.
- Do public demos, lectures. Suggest feature articles. “Be interesting and visible”
- Maintain list of contacts. Send thank you cards. Mail twice a year: new images, news from past year. Build a chain of contacts. Word of mouth.