

# feature shoot

Fab Five Friday 

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Date: Fri, Mar 8, 2019 at 9:00 AM

Subject: Feature Shoot's Fab Five Friday: 5 Marketing Tips

Photographers,

As you know the photography industry is unlike any other art market, and [Mary Virginia Swanson](#) understands its every nuance. As an advisor, educator, and consultant, she's overseen everything from licensing rights to photo book publications. Whether she was working on projects for Magnum Photos or heading up the LOOK3 Festival, she's spent decades helping emerging and establishing photographers reach the next level in their careers. She's also engaged with some of today's most exciting photographic voices, including Alec Soth, who described her marketing workshop he attended early in his career as part of his being the recipient of the inaugural Santa Fe Prize (2003) as a "life-changing experience."

Here, Swanson shares with us her five best marketing tips for photographers.

**RESEARCH** is the root source of success for any business. If you want to engage your imagery with gifted clients, curators and others, it is your job to identify who they are. This means taking a good look at where you see exceptional photography today and singling out those who clearly respect the images they showcase, whether the final format be in print, online or on the wall. The names and industries you target should reflect today's broad interest in photography, as evidenced by compelling images featured on book and music packaging, the new generation of print magazines, the framed art hanging in hotels, hospitals and public spaces. Dig deep by identifying the photo researcher/graphic designer/corporate art consultant/print dealer/interior designer/public art officials and others that were involved in the choice of photography, and figure out how to put your work (and yourself) in front of them.

Build your own mailing list, and know why you have identified each individual you place on that list. Start with local professionals, as you are most likely to be able to secure in-person meetings within driving distance.

**COMMITMENT TO QUALITY** must be unwavering. This extends to your marketing pieces. As an extension of your work, they must reflect the highest level of design and

production, whether delivered in print, electronically, or communicated through social media.

**THINK (AND ACT) LIKE A BUSINESS PERSON.** Adapt the mindset of a successful business. Be able to define your brand attributes and brand assets. Keep your website current. Communicate wisely and appropriately, and whenever possible, in the manner people prefer (print, email, text, or via social media messaging). Accept that you are not a graphic designer, an accountant, or a lawyer: seek professional help in all areas that others can handle better than yourself.

**BE PRESENT.** If we don't know about you, we can't talk about you.\* Plan to invest in attending strategic portfolio review events and enter targeted competitions with reviewers and jurors that are on your radar. Research the individuals who will be seeing your work in advance of paying fees to attend the event or enter the competition. Learn all you can about their interests in imagery before you have a chance to meet them in person, and be ready for that day when you intersect.

**MAKE NEW WORK.** Give yourself a project or assignment to produce that you can accomplish (think local, access ensured, etc.). Push yourself, your craft, your ideas, and your vision every day.

Have a great weekend,

The [Feature Shoot](#) team

\*Be sure to check out Feature Shoot's guide to [50 Photography Websites Accepting Submissions \(and How You Can Apply\)](#). Download the guide today for only \$10.

**P.S.** Be sure to check out Swanson's books [Publish Your Photography Book: Revised & Updated](#), (Princeton Architectural Press), co-authored by Darius D. Himes, and stay tuned for her upcoming book [Finding Your Audience: An Introduction to Marketing Your Photographs](#). Swanson has marketing workshops coming up in the US and abroad; visit her [website](#) to sign up or learn more.

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