

From: "Pechman Imaging Management" <feedback@pechmanimaging.com>
Subject: **ITs SENIOR TIME AGAIN!**
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To: "Steve Freund" <steve@pechmanimaging.com>
Reply-To: "Pechman Imaging Management" <feedback@pechmanimaging.com>



IT's SENIOR TIME AGAIN!

"March Madness" is not only a college basketball phenomenon, but the term also applies to the annual beginning of marketing Senior photography. Change is in the wind. Understanding the evolving Senior landscape, even for the "Class of 2007", is crucial. **Marketing more to trends in digital photography just may be what is needed to jump start the sagging Senior market.**

Only a few years ago, all that a Senior studio had to do was send out direct mail brochures or over sized post cards, two or three times, to attract senior sittings. Gurus would say, the bigger the mail piece the better. Simple as it was, this marketing strategy worked for big and small studios. Then came the tech revolution at the turn of the century. High schoolers are now hooked on cell phones, video games and any gadget they can afford such as I-pods. Today the electronic medium is what teenagers gravitate towards, and as such, has become the communication medium they understand best. Photographers need to continue analyzing how direct mail can still benefit their marketing efforts through mom and the Senior.

This year might be the time to evaluate how to revamp Senior direct mail literature to direct the reader, both mom and Senior, to the studio's web site. Attention grabbing direct mail pieces can strike a new balance between using less verbiage with just enough examples of portraits and adding examples of digital products to persuade the reader to seek out additional information at www.yourstudio.com. Your site must be designed to "**wow**" and persuade the general public that only your studio can provide the Senior with both service and product they need. Please take a look at the following web site: www.sgt-peppers.com. **(click on galleries.) If your web site is not comparable, get there as soon as you can. Seniors need to be "wowed!"** Remember, a spectacular web site could pay dividends in the long run by reducing your direct mail costs both in content and postal weight. By now your web site address should be part of your yellow page ad.

Things that should be on your studio's radar screen.

1. Local trends in your senior market:

- a. Which competitor studios are offering new products.
- b. Sudden changes in methods of advertising--e.g. direct mail & internet.

- c. Changes in standard packages offered.
- d. Changes in business methods---policies for sitting fees, proofs or proofless, pricing, etc.
- e. Number of totally digital studios.

2. Impact of new technology:

- a. Cameras--better resolution and lenses providing better image quality.
- b. Software--to enable studios to create new products and streamline internal workflow.
- c. Consumers becoming competitors--are more of your seniors being photographed by mom or high school friends? (Are you better equipped than your best customers?)
- d. Are you staying above water with adaptation to new software? (If not,talk to your lab.) Your competition may be ahead of you on the technology curve.

3. Changes in consumer spending habits:

a. More consumers are looking for “value” because household budgets are being impacted by world events--oil crisis, etc.

b. Demographics--is your middle class shrinking within a 50 mile radius?

c. **Meet a typical American family: (Get shocked!)** Go to--

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/04/AR2006030400238.html>.

4. Growth in number of competitors continue to rise:

a. Is this true for your marketing area? Nation wide, more photographers are going after the Senior market each year, thereby, dividing the limited “pool of available seniors.”

What to do? Suggestion: Set the pace and trends that other studios must follow.

What to watch for! NYC advertising firms are concerned about rapid changes in ad media caused by new technology. Corporations have shifted and increased their advertising to the Internet by 30% in one year. Now this may not seem like a big deal, but regular hard copy advertising does not fit in well with the Internet. Operation “rethink” is in progress. **Teenagers are now becoming the hardest age group to reach with ads.** Currently, ad agencies are attempting to place ads on cell phones. These are not just ordinary ads, but are “interactive ads.” Take a Nike shoe ad. The teenager will be able to change the color of the shoe and send the picture to a friend for an opinion--all with the cell phone. I-pods are next in line for ads. So just where does this leave the professional photographer in the future for effective advertising to connect to Seniors in cyber space?

Something to think about! Perhaps a studio’s web site might incorporate an interactive display where a Senior can change a portrait from color to B&W to sepia by a click of a mouse. Seniors can now think about print options. Make it into a game. Have a voting contest. Post your favorite pose of each sitting or ambassador. Encourage your Seniors to have their friends and relatives vote for them. Voting can be done by email on less interactive sites. Winner receives a prize. This game builds traffic on your site and will pay dividends in the near future with new customers.

Have a great Senior year.

If you think a friend or studio would benefit from our newsletter, have them contact [Pechman Imaging](#) to sign up.

Let us know your thoughts.

[Email us.](#)

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