

# 11 WAYS TO MAKE MONEY

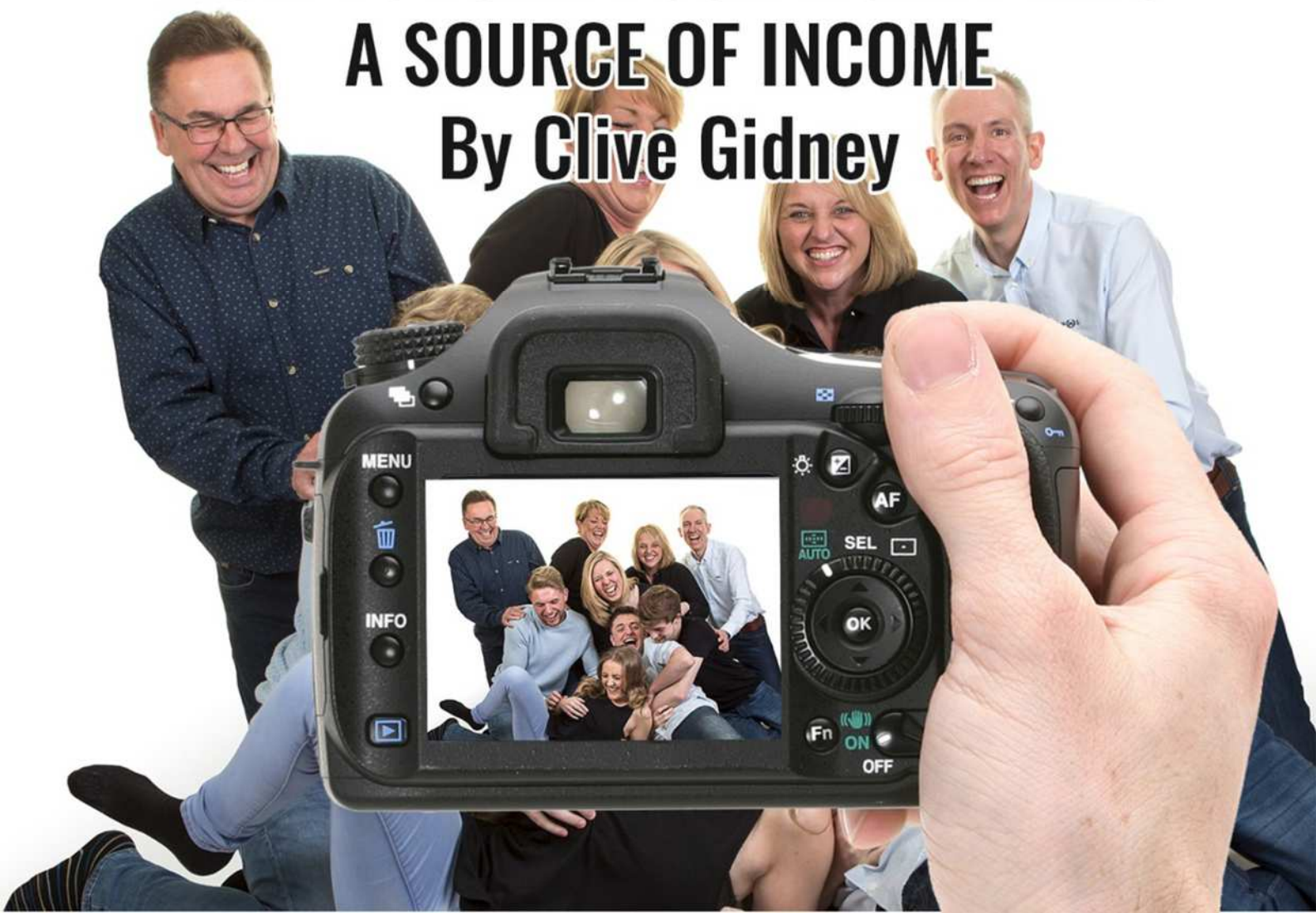
FROM

# PHOTOGRAPHY

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**HOW TO TURN YOUR HOBBY INTO  
A SOURCE OF INCOME**

**By Clive Gidney**



# 11 Ways to Make Money from Photography

by [clivegidneyphotography.com](http://clivegidneyphotography.com)



## Introduction

So you love taking photographs & think you'd like to make some money from photography? This may be just a bit on income on the side, or maybe you dream of giving up your 9-5 job and becoming a full time professional photographer. Whichever it is there are lots of ways of turning your passion into an income.

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## Weddings



It's one of the most classic ways to make money as a photographer. You have plenty of opportunities. It's physical, stressful and can be exhausting, but there's good money to be made. The amount you can charge mostly depends on your reputation, the time of the year, and the location. When quoting your clients, don't forget to take into account the hours of pre and post-production – not only the action time.

You don't necessarily have to start a wedding photography business to make money from shooting weddings. You can start by contacting clients or offering your services to friends and relatives. Wedding photography is particularly profitable, so it's always a good option if you're looking to make money.

Most photographers often need a second shooter at weddings. If you aren't too confident about going out there on your own and taking on clients by yourself, working as an assistant or a second shooter is a great way to get your feet wet, gain more experience, and earn some extra cash

Now, whether you decide to do wedding photography full-time or not, it's important to have good equipment at your disposal if you want to make your clients happy and ensure that they recommend you to all their friends.



## Portraits

Here you have a few options.

- 1 Have your own studio or have the budget to rent a professional studio to be able to offer photo shoots. Either way this creates overheads which you may not want or be ready for.
- 2 Use outdoor or location shoots, so even if you don't have a studio yet, there are lots of opportunities out there for you. Local parks are often a good place. However you are at the mercy of the weather and have limited control over your lighting.
- 3 Photoshoots in the clients own home with a mobile "studio" set up. At [www.alteredimages.uk.com](http://www.alteredimages.uk.com) this is my preferred option using Lastolite hilites & Elinchrom BxRi Stobes. People are more relaxed in their own homes.



To get started, you need to build a strong portfolio, get your own website, tell your friends and family, share your work on social media, and do whatever you can to get the word out about your services.

Some types of photo shoots you can do:

- Family portraits
- Newborn photo shoots
- Maternity photo shoots
- Pet photo shoots
- Boudoir photo shoots

Depending on the type of shoot, you can either charge for the shoot & then separately for whatever the client buys. I prefer to offer a collection (never use the word package) at an all in price. I also say it's my job to create images that they (the client) want to buy so I offer a guarantee that they will love their photos or they don't pay a penny. Radical I know & I don't know of any other photographer who does this, but it works for me

### **Stock photography**

Do you have a sizeable collection of high-quality photos? Why not submit them to stock photography sites? It's a good way to earn a stream of passive income! Become a contributor for sites like iStock, BigStock, and Shutterstock, or upload your photos to your own personal Flickr account and license them through Getty Images.



If you don't already have an extensive portfolio, you can start shooting one. Be prepared to identify your niche. Stock photography is not necessarily about shooting beautiful images, but more about shooting images that someone will want to use to illustrate what every their current project is, an advert, magazine article etc. This isn't something I do but I attended a lecture by a lady who specialised in gardening related images. Her goal was to

have 10,000 images on line for an income of £10kpa. Her best-selling image was of a black bin bag tied to a garden fork stuck in the ground!

Stock sites require you to sign up first. Make sure you carefully read the guidelines, as some platforms forbid you to submit the same images to competitors. Once you're registered, you can start feeding your account. Every image that you submit will be evaluated before publication – but after a few days, you'll master the whole process very easily.

What makes a winning stock photo? The quality of the shot, a file uploaded in extra high resolution (since it can be used in a lot of different formats) and a subject everyone can relate to. The world of stock images is getting more and more standardized, as the rather unflattering adjective 'stocky' tells. This market is saturated – around 150,000 new pieces are added every day onto Shutterstock only! Even if you manage to shoot the perfect picture of 'young and handsome employees mawkishly smiling to a computer screen', it might never get noticed. To optimize your chances, make sure to add as many relevant keywords in your description. The best tip here is to think of the possible queries someone



would be looking for a photo like yours would type in the search bar. Then add plenty of keywords when you upload your images – it helps folk find (and hopefully buy) your pics.

### **Blogging**

Starting a blog is a great way to get your photos seen. But not only that, but you can make money from your website. See those adverts on blog page? The blog author gets money every time someone clicks on them. The amount of money they make depends on how many followers they have. Often, it's more of a labour of love than anything, and it's not providing a huge income, but they still do make some money. If you're interested in blogging, and want to know more, then have a look at this link [Monetise Your Blog](#) but be aware that it's a rather competitive market, which takes a lot of hard work and dedication

### **Selling fine art prints**

A beautiful photo is a work of art, and people will pay for art. If you want to earn some extra cash by selling prints of your work, here are a few ways to do that:



- Sell your photos on your own website or upload them to a site that will sell them for you.
- Bring framed copies of your photos to sell at art and craft fairs.
- Get your photos displayed at coffee shops, restaurants, and other outlets.
- Offer printed copies to your clients.
- Sell your photos at local art or photography galleries.

Before you start selling prints, find a good printing service first (in the UK I use either [www.dscolourlabs.co.uk](http://www.dscolourlabs.co.uk) or [www.onevisionimaging.com](http://www.onevisionimaging.com)) to ensure the quality of the end product. Also, as a general rule, people don't normally buy photos with people in them, so try to avoid these kinds of photos. After all, the prints they buy will likely be displayed in their homes or offices.

### **Photography for small / local business**



These days, a business without a website is pretty much like a weekend without a lie-in. Offices, golf centres, retailers, hotels, yoga instructors: they all have a website that they need to fill with beautiful images. This is where you come in and offer to photograph their stores, their products or even themselves. How do you find them? In the real world!

Take a walk around your high-street and speak to business owners in an informal way about what you do, and how you can help them attract more clients with stunning photos. Take your ipad or tablet to show your work, as some people want to see visuals rather than explanations. Many businesses in your area are likely to look for a photographer on Google, and you want to be among the first results that appear – so make sure you've worked on your SEO.

What about Airbnb? More and more people rent their apartments for short periods. They desperately need beautiful shots of their interiors. And it's only one example of an unexpected audience you can reach out to. Think out of the box: you'd be surprised to see how many people actually need the help of a good photographer like you.

### **Teach photography**

Not everyone can learn from the internet, and if you have the ability to teach, then you can reach out to those people, and show them how it's done. Prepare your session / lesson material but be prepared to go "off piste" if / when you get a left field question. Remember you don't need to know everything about photography, or even everything in your niche - you just need to know a bit more than your students.

You can teach either group classes, or one on one sessions. You can teach face to face or online with tools like Skype or Zoom. And if you record/video yourself in the sessions you have the makings of a YouTube channel or blog posts

### **Photography tours / workshops**

Many experienced photographers in highly competitive genres such as landscape & travel photography or portrait & model photography run courses and workshops. You do get different levels of photographer, so you have to be careful that everyone gets advice & coaching commensurate with their experience level, from beginners, to the more experienced photographer. With an experienced photographer, it's often more about the subtleties of opinion, so it's a different discussion to the one you would have with a beginner.

Running courses and workshops is a crowded market, but there is still space for new entrants so long as you offer something different. There are loads of portrait portfolio builder workshops with models but so often the lighting is all set up & the participants all come away with similar images, so how about a workshop that gives your clients great images AND teaches them about lighting set ups - [studio lighting workshops](#) for example.



Likewise there are hundreds of Lake District tours but you might want to add a different angle - [wild camping photography workshops](#) for example

Be ready to work hard. Running workshops can be very intense and tiring work, as it's such a big responsibility. You may not be the most famous photographers on the planet, but you should put every ounce of effort into ensuring the students have a good time – if they do, they will often come again.

You sometimes get difficult people signing up, but they're in the minority. Everyone has paid the same amount of money so treat everyone equally. As a tour leader though, you have the right to refuse to travel with a difficult person again, as he or she will upset everyone else.'

For successful workshops an intimate knowledge of your subject matter is essential. Your clients are paying a premium to shoot with you, so try to arrange some special events as well. If it's more than a day, for many people, a photography workshop is also a holiday, so all the non-photographic components must be well planned and researched.

Be prepared to use your camera to demonstrate ideas, approaches and techniques, but be always available to help when required. On arrival explain the photographic opportunities that are available, then set a time limit that ensures nobody feels rushed or is left "hanging about"

### **Event photography**



It's one of the most classic ways to make money as a photographer. Proms, bar mitzvahs, birthdays, masonic balls, company events... You have plenty of opportunities. It's physical and can be exhausting, but there's good money to be made. Sometimes an event organiser will hire (and pay) you to take photographs at their event. The amount you can charge mostly depends on your reputation, the time of the year, and the location. When quoting your clients, don't forget to take into account the hours of pre and post-production - not only the action time.

More often though, you'll be shooting on spec and relying on the people at the event to buy your photographs. There are two ways you can sell

- 1) At the event making prints there & then using an event printer
- 2) After the event uploading your photos to a website where event attendees can purchase at a later date.

I've found the former yields higher sales, particularly if it's an event where there are a few drinks flowing. You'll need to shoot tethered to a computer/laptop & also have an event printer - your personal inkjet printer just won't cut it. In this case I'd recommend having an assistant who can show the attendees the images, print them & take the money, while you concentrate on photographing the next clients.

The later can work well, particularly if you specialise in certain types of events where you get well known eg [field sports photography](#) for example



And for finding contacts, the Internet has made it easier than ever. For this job, more than any other, you'll need a complete online portfolio at your disposal. And it needs to be fully SEO optimized. It's crucial because people looking for an event photographer are most likely to find them after a search on Google.



## **Photo contests**

Some competitions grant you cash, some equipment, some others give you the chance to realize your dream photography holiday. Of course, unless you decide to bribe the jury (and I strongly recommend you NOT to do that), the result of any contest is very uncertain. This is why you shouldn't rely on this option if you want to make a living as a photographer. Even if you don't win, participating in a contest is always a great way to make more connections, and to have your work and website's link featured on external websites. It's good for your exposure, your SEO, and ultimately should help bring you more clients. To find out what contests are current - [have a quick look on Google](#)

## **Become an assistant**

Assisting as a photographer is one of the best ways to find work, and start making money fast. You will need a strong portfolio if you're expecting to go and work at weddings and such, with a camera, but there is high end work, such as fashion, where you won't get behind the camera, but still gain experience and money. Photographers often need assistants on jobs, and you should expect to be compensated for your time, and the biggest advantage of all is that you don't have to look for the work, it comes to you.

## **Am I Good Enough?**

It should be obvious that you need to be a competent photographer. It's not enough that your mum/dad/boyfriend/girlfriend/mates say that you take a good snap because they're biased, unless of course, they are a qualified professional photographer themselves. You need to know your way around your camera so you're not fiddling with the controls at the vital moment. You need to have a thorough grasp of the all concepts of composition - lead lines, negative space, telling a story with you images, when less is more etc etc. You need to have an excellent understanding of the relationship between shutter speed, aperture & ISO. You need to understand lighting & how it affects you images. And more!



Now if this is not all second nature to you, and it needs to be, do not despair, because all this stuff can be learned. There's loads of stuff on YouTube, although you may find conflicting advice. There's courses you can go on. Or you can accelerate you progress by seeking out professional coaching & mentoring [clivegidneyphotography.com/coaching](http://clivegidneyphotography.com/coaching)

## **Equipment**

It goes without saying that you'll need half decent equipment - using your phone won't cut it... unless you're running workshops on "Awesome Mobile Phone Photography". I would suggest that you need an interchangeable lens camera - either a dSLR or mirrorless camera but beyond that, most modern cameras take good pictures. You don't need a full frame camera - I use a Panasonic G9 micro 4/3 camera. Similarly you don't need a bag of fast zoom or prime lenses although in some circumstances the extra light gathering capabilities of such lenses is a big help. That said, the kit lens which comes with many entry/mid-range cameras often doesn't deliver the edge to edge sharpness of some more pro spec lenses. But at the end of the day, the client doesn't care what camera/lens



combination you use if you produce amazing pictures. My advice would be don't spend vast sums on equipment until you've identified a definite need and you are making the money to pay for it.

### **Finding Clients**

The hardest part about getting started in photography, is finding people who are willing to pay you the money you want, for the work you're good at. The photographers who make the most money are not necessarily the best photographers, although make no mistake, they are good. The ones that make the most money are the ones who are best at marketing their services. Use all the tools available.

Word of mouth is one of the strongest recommendations. Whenever you do a shoot for someone, leave them with some business cards at the very least. Give them an incentive to recommend you. It goes without saying that you must have a social media presence these days - facebook, Instagram, twitter. And you'll need your own website - it doesn't have to be whizzy, it just has to show off your portfolio & give potential clients a way to contact you.

And of course, there's paid advertising. This will primarily be google adwords and or facebook advertising. Be aware that you can spend a lot of money for little results so I'd recommend teaming up with someone who knows what they are doing

### **Pricing**

People ask me how much should I charge, or even should I charge at all to start with. In my experience, most photographers undervalue their skills at the outset - myself included. When I started out shooting client portraits, I offered free photoshoots & then collections (never call them packages) starting from £75. I could end up spending four hours - travelling to a shoot, setting up, the shoot itself, breaking down & travelling home... And then another 3 or 4 hours post processing for £75! Phew! Now my collections start at £295 and the typical client investment is more like £500/£750 per shoot. Ok so I do less shoots... but I'm making more money - win / win

Have a look at what other photographers in your field are charging to establish a benchmark. Remember there's more competitive advantage in being the best at what you do than being the cheapest... And there's NO competitive advantage in being the second cheapest!

### **Summary**

Turning your passion into an income can be fun & very rewarding. But do not believe that it's easy peasy. Like most things, the more you put into it, the more you'll get out of it.

If you'd like to explore more how you can make money with your photography, contact me for a free no obligation chat [info@clivegidneyphotography.com](mailto:info@clivegidneyphotography.com)