



HOW TO MAKE YOUR BUSINESS VISUALLY STUNNING

The *7 Key Steps* before hiring a
photographer or videographer



MARK SPENCER
-PHOTOGRAPHY & FILM-



INTRODUCTION

The variety of marketing and promotional opportunities for brands to create awareness of their product or service has never been so great. One of the best ways to grab attention is by making your brand **Visually Stunning**. By using beautifully crafted images and video, you can lift your brand above the competition, giving you a valuable competitive edge. This is not however as simple as employing a great photographer or videographer. You need to fully understand your brand, your audience and the message you are wanting to convey.

There are so many ways to get your business in front of your ideal audience in this digital age, the opportunities are endless. Through social media, websites, blogs, vlogs, old fashioned print and live platforms there has never been so much choice as there is currently. You would think with all these options, getting your brand message out there and subsequently getting the customers or orders through your door would be easy...

The problem is that unless you have a large marketing team the pressure to do this always falls on you as the business owner or the marketing manager. The pressure to try to cover all of the many marketing options across various social media platforms is huge. As a small business owner myself I understand this pressure and I have produced this guide to help you.

In my role as photographer and videographer, working with many great brands, I have the experience to see what works when it comes to using **Visually Stunning** photography and video effectively to promote your business.

I hope that this guide will help you to get the most from your Photography and Video content. Hopefully this will help you to see the task of promoting your business in a clearer light before ever employing the services of a photographer or videographer. The feeling of overwhelm when faced with all of the marketing options can be a real pressure, hopefully these 7 steps will help you to structure your brand message and reduce the overwhelm.



HAVE A *Vision*



Before ever starting down a route to promoting your business you need to have a clear vision. This **vision** or **goal** is the key to creating good and effective **Visually Stunning** photography and video for your business.

Vision and goal setting is the primary key to building a successful business. With your visions and business goals clearly defined you can start to think about who is your target audience. Too many times people think that they will sell to anyone who will listen. This is not the case though. Defining your business vision will help you to describe your ideal customer. This will help you to reach out to them with posts and content that they will resonate with.

With the right vision you will be able to take your target audience on a journey:

AWARENESS

Brand Awareness
Increasing awareness of brand through **Visually Stunning** media.



PURCHASE

Social Engagement
Creating conversation, establishing value & social proof of your product or service.

Conversion
Improving conversion rate, making sales

I am aware that if you are reading this guide and you already have an established business then this step might feel unnecessary. I do believe though that to go through all the following steps effectively this is a key process to ensure you are still on the right path in growing your business. This might reveal some surprising results and be warned it can even make you re-think your whole business goals! On a personal level going through this process is the reason I am here trying to help you grow your business.

Don't discard how hard this process can be. Vision setting is intended to set the direction of your business and indeed life, for the next few years. Give this process time and space, get away from your daily routine, be patient, you will need to search within and dig deep into the business and yourself to search for answers to some difficult questions.

- Don't set impossible goals but do make the goals something that will energise you and stretch you.
- Create something that feels both a little scary but exciting at the same time.
- The sweet spot for a vision is when they are both Aspirational and Inspirational. Pushing you and your business to grow and at the same time filling you with energy and fulfilment.

Get your note pad out and get clear on your business, why you started it, who it serves, your passion and your beliefs.

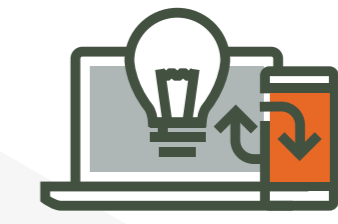


VISION *Statement*

With a clear Vision for the business you can then craft your perfect Vision Statement. This becomes your guide to who you and your business are and becomes the reference point when describing your business.



CUSTOMER Avatar



If you think your customer base is **'everyone'** you are on a quick route to failure from a marketing and visual representation perspective. There is no better saying when thinking of this step than **'You cant be all things to all men/women'**.

By niching down to talk to a key customer(s) your message will be clearer and thus your marketing and visual media will be more focused. This in turn will have a bigger impact on your ideal customer.

I am not saying you will not sell goods or services to people who fall outside of your key **Customer Avatar** groups but you will have much more success and grow an engaged audience for your brand if you identify your ideal target audience first.

What is a Customer Avatar? - This is a fictional character that represents your ideal customer. When you have this ideal customer in mind this will help you to understand the motivating beliefs, fears, problems, desires that can influence your customers buying decisions.

This can be based on a real customer if you are an established business. By using a real life example of a truly engaged existing customer you will see how many other similar customers fall inside these typical **Customer** or **Avatar** traits.

Through understanding the **Customer Avatar** you will be better placed to perfect your marketing efforts to talk to these customers. This will in turn help you identify the kind of **Visually Stunning** photography and video content they would like to see to get your product or service message across.

Initially this can feel like a huge process to identify a singular customer avatar. In reality you will need 2-3 customer avatars. Do not get too bogged down in the details of this initially. This profile(s) needs to be a living and breathing document that will be changed and adapted over time as you get to understand your ideal customer.

e.g. If you were a mechanic your customer base might be anyone who drives a car/van/motorbike, etc. However if the vision for your business was to be the 'go-to' mechanic in a defined area specialising in Landrover conversions for example, then you can see your customer Avatar becomes more niche. Based on this you would seek out Landrover Groups online and see what type of person they are and build your customer Avatar around this.

From this you can see that the type of **Visually Stunning** photography and video content you would create becomes much more defined towards this customer group.

In this example I am not saying you won't still be a mechanic working on a range of vehicles but if your **Vision** is to be something different, then you need to get this message out, not your current status message.

BUILD YOUR *Brand Book*



Do you ever wonder why the top brands have such consistent messaging in their visual media? In many cases it is because they have a **Brand Book, Brand Guide** or **Look Book** that clearly defines their brand identity in a visual form.

Having a document (**Brand Book**) for your own business will really help you to get your brand message across to any creative service that you wish to employ to provide a service for your brand. You can also use this each time you plan any marketing content for your business.

What is a Brand Book?

Your **Brand Book** should be a visual representation of what your business ethos and vision is all about. It should clearly show how your business is represented visually. Within the Brand Book should be key elements of your Business and Brand including your Vision, Background Story (The reason the business exists), Core Values, Customer Avatar(s), plus visual representations of What your Business **'is'** and more importantly what it is **'Not!'**

Collect images of your ideal customers in the lifestyle that they lead, images of similar brands or your own business photography that you really like. Collate as many visual images that represent the look and feel of your business in one document. Set up a Keynote or Publisher Presentation Document. You can use platforms like Pinterest, Instagram, etc. to do your research.

The details and content of your brand book will be specific to your business, product or service. The visual representations of your product or service in use and your ideal customers enjoying these products and services will genuinely help your brand and business become **Visually Stunning.**

Having this **Brand Book** will really help you each time you want to create visual content for your brand. The **Brand Book** will become the reference document to ensure all your marketing messages will connect with your ideal audience. This will be a key document to help explain your vision to any prospective photographer, videographer, advertising agency, web designer, etc.

The **Brand Book** is the best investment you can make in your business. This document will go a long way to helping reduce the overwhelm that you can face each time you look to get your message out.

At the very least before ever engaging the services of a photographer, videographer or indeed any creative service like website designers, etc, create a Pinterest Board of images that reflect your business and brand.

Here's an example illustration. This is a fictional natural soap brand appealing to 30 to 40 year old women.

[Take a Look >](#)





HAVE A *Plan*



You need to have a plan in place before you can create any form of Visually Stunning Photography or Video Content. With a defined **Plan** or **Strategy** in place you will get much more value from any photo shoot or video production you carry out for your business or brand. This is true regardless of whether you are creating your own content or hiring the services of a professional.



**STRATEGY WITHOUT TACTICS IS
THE SLOWEST ROUTE TO VICTORY.
TACTICS WITHOUT STRATEGY IS THE
NOISE BEFORE DEFEAT**



Chinese General Sun Tsu circa 500BC

I love this quote and even though it is over 2500 years old it is still relevant today. This is especially true when it comes to marketing your business and brand. I have seen many examples of businesses investing both time and money (both of which are precious resources) in marketing ideas that simply do not work or bring in little or no return on investment. This is especially true in today's complex world with so many options to promote your business.

A scatter gun approach with no consistency will never work and spreads your time and resources too thin adding to the feeling of overwhelm.

The key difference between a successful approach to creating successful **Visually Stunning** photography and Video and one that is less successful, is a clear understanding of the **strategy** behind the actions you are taking when it comes to creating the **Visually Stunning** content.

Part of this strategic plan must include the goals for the business. This can include: Increase traffic to the website; increase leads; increase sales; sell more products, etc.

With a clear **Strategy** and **Tactical** approach to attract your ideal customer your overwhelm to what content to create and on which platform will be greatly reduced.

USE THE CORRECT *Tactics*

What do I mean by **tactics**? These are the tools you will use to implement your business plan or **strategy**. So with a clear idea on your business vision, a clear target audience (Your Customer Avatar) followed by a clear plan on what you want your photography or video to achieve, you can then start to decide which tactics to implement and where to use your visual media.

Talk about **Strategy vs Tactics** can at first feel a little overwhelming when all you want are some images for your website or social media. I understand you just want a job off your 'To-Do' list and want to get someone to create the content for you. This might be true, but by having even the most basic outline guide to cover these key steps will significantly help in getting the right photography and video fit for your business.

To give an analogy for this so it makes more sense; Lets look at making a delicious meal as an example.

The Recipe is the Strategy or Plan

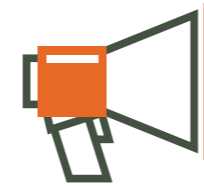
The Ingredients are the tactics.

You could simply throw all the ingredients in a pot and hope for the best, this may turn out ok but it is more likely this would not be a meal you would like to serve up to your customers.

Alternatively if you follow the recipe (Strategy) you will have a clear process with all the right steps being followed in a controlled way with a clear goal (the meal). By using a Recipe (The Plan), seemingly unrelated ingredients (tactics) can come together to create a culinary masterpiece to have your customer's mouths watering!

In short if you know the tactics you are going to use before you ever take a single photo or shoot a single frame of film, you will be in a much better position.

Tactics include the photos & videos you create, social media posts, paid social media advertising, print advertising, leaflet drops, etc.





PRODUCTION - PHOTO/VIDEO *shoot*

With answers, even if basic to all of the previous stages 1-5, it is only at this stage do you start to think about employing a photographer or videographer to create the content. This is when you can start to define the brief for the project which should include short summary pieces and explanations of all of the steps you have gone through.

- VISION** - A short vision Statement.
- CUSTOMER AVATAR(S)** - A description of your target audience.
- BRAND BOOK** - Visual example of the type of imagery that best represents your Business and Brand. This can be a simple Pinterest Board however I do recommend building your own Brand Book.
- STRATEGY OR PLAN** - Have a clear plan on what the project is hoping to achieve. i.e. What is the photography or Video content going to achieve for your business, what are the Goals?
- TACTICAL PLAN** - Where will the images and video be used? This will help the photographer and videographer to deliver the content in the right format.

By having all of these elements in place before ever looking for a photographer or videographer you will be in a much more informed position to get success from any Shoot.

These steps enable you to be in control of your own brand by giving clear outcomes rather than taking the chance that the photographer or videographer will interpret your needs correctly. Through clear planning and a well defined brief the success of the shoot and getting a return on your investment is in a much stronger position.



PLANNING *The list*

Like everything in life, you need a **plan!** **Visually Stunning** Photography and Video content creation is no different and needs planning to the last detail. This might be something you do yourself or you subcontract this out to the Photographer or Videographer.

You can not expect to simply book a photographer for a day and get **Visually Stunning** content. There are many facets to consider depending on what it is you are wanting to achieve. With clear planning and goals you will get far more benefits from a shoot.

Remember a good Photographer **MAKES** great photographs they don't simply **TAKE** great photographs.

The following are just a few things to think about when planning your own Shoot.

- ✔ **Venue** (Studio, business premises, indoor, outdoor)
- ✔ **Day**
- ✔ **Time of Day** (what sort of light conditions)
- ✔ **Weather** (This is critical if outdoors but also if shooting indoors and requiring natural light)
- ✔ **Season** (time of year particularly outdoor shoots are dependent on the seasons)

- ✔ **Products** (have you got all the products in stock and are they in good condition. Note: The camera picks up all the blemishes)
- ✔ **Models** (these can be friends and family but do they represent Your Customer Avatar)
- ✔ **Stylists** (How will your product or service be 'dressed')
- ✔ **Lighting** (Natural light vs Artificial)
- ✔ **Props** (who will source them, what are they, make a list)
- ✔ **Backdrops/Backgrounds**
- ✔ **Assistants** (How many - in-house staff? or contracted in?)
- ✔ **Be present** at the shoot if possible to see the images produced. Creation stage is the best time to make adjustments, not when the shoot is over.
- ✔ **Draw out and plan each photo or frame of film.** This might seem excessive but it is far better than having to re-shoot a scene or photo because the wrong props were in the wrong image or scene.
- ✔ **Ensure the photographer has the plan** so he/she can bring/hire the correct kit.
- ✔ **Allow time** between each photograph or scene to set up the next one. Put time frames for each shot so it is realistic.





“

PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM FOR ME IS ALL ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THE LIGHT AND CAPTURING THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE SCENE IN FRONT OF ME

Mark Spencer

”

CUSTOMER *Reviews*



WE ARE LUCKY TO HAVE FOUND A PHOTOGRAPHER WHO **UNDERSTANDS PERFECTLY** OUR NEEDS AND WANTS. TOGETHER WITH HIS BACKGROUND IN MARKETING, EYE FOR DETAIL AND PATIENCE IN WAITING FOR THE PERFECT DAY WE ARE **100% SATISFIED**

Christine Jackson -
Hartley Botanic

”



MARK HAS BEEN OUR GO TO PHOTOGRAPHER AND VIDEO MAKER FOR MANY YEARS NOW. HE REALLY UNDERSTANDS OUR BRAND AND ALWAYS GETS **AMAZING PHOTOGRAPHS** OF OUR PRODUCTS.

WE USE A LARGE AMOUNT OF IMAGERY AND VIDEO ACROSS OUR WEB SITE, PRINT MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS AND MARK ALWAYS MANAGES TO PRODUCE CONTENT TO SUIT ALL OF THIS MEDIA. WE WOULD HIGHLY RECOMMEND HIM FIRST AND FOREMOST FOR THE **EXCELLENT RESULTS** BUT ALSO FOR HIS KNOWLEDGE IN THE INDUSTRY AND HIS BACKGROUND IN MARKETING MEANS HE UNDERSTANDS OUR BRIEFS AND WE ARE ALWAYS **DELIGHTED WITH THE RESULTS.**

Sarah Monahan - Gabriel Ash

”

MARK IS A **PASSIONATE** AND **DETERMINED** PHOTOGRAPHER WITH A STRONG BACKGROUND IN BRAND STORY TELLING THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM. I WOULD **HIGHLY RECOMMEND** USING MARK SPENCER

Eleanor Cornwell - Marketing
Manager Muck Boots

”





SUMMARY *What next?*

Hopefully this e-book has given you some information to help you to get the most out of any photography or videography sessions. These steps are equally important whether you go down the self content creation or hiring in photographers and videographers.

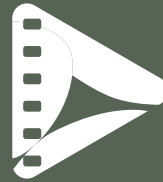
It might all sound very involved but through experience the only way to get a real return on investment in creating the content is by following the above steps. All too often I see businesses wasting time and money on photography and video that does not produce results.

If you would like to make your business Visually Stunning.

Talk to Mark!

[Book Your Call Here >](#)





MARK SPENCER
- PHOTOGRAPHY & FILM -

WWW.MARK-SPENCER.COM

Copyright Notice

All the photographs and content in this document is published under UK copyright laws by Mark Spencer Photography & Film. All rights reserved. Do not share, copy, reproduce or sell any part of this document unless you have written permission from Mark Spencer Photography & Film. All infringements will be prosecuted. You may use the content for your own use in your own business but not for any other purpose. Photographers, Videographers, Consultants or coaches cannot use any of this material with their clients without written permission from Mark Spencer Photography & Film. Requests for permission to reproduce content contained herein should be sent to hello@mark-spencer.com