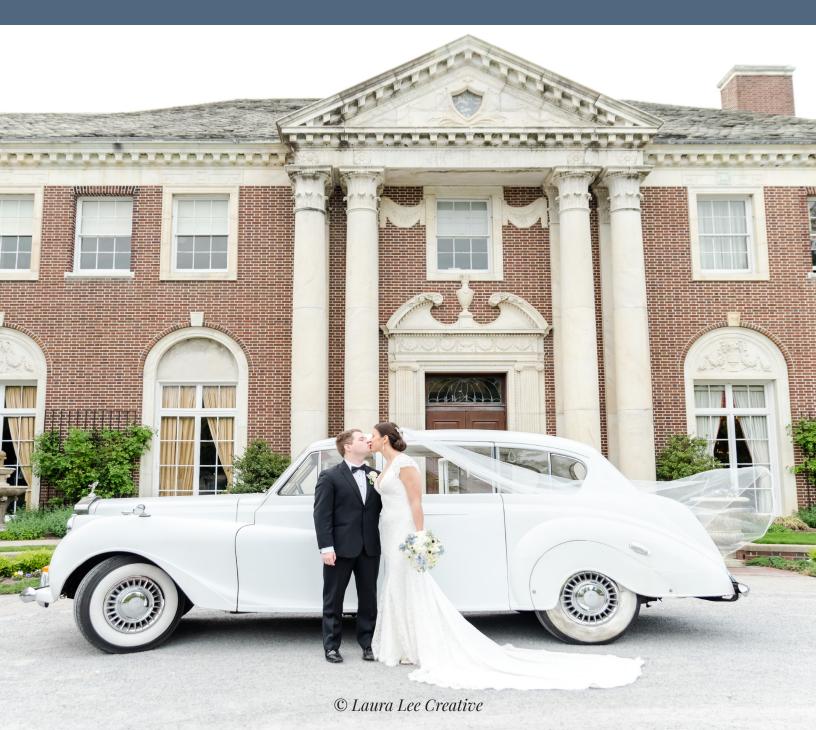# 10 WORKFLOW HACKS FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

To Instantly Get Ahead of Your To-Do List!

BY LAURA LEE

WELCOME LETTER

Hello Friend!!

Thanks so much for grabbing this free guide!!

I created this because I know what it's like to be burnt out, to feel like you're at rock bottom, to feel like you're always just treading water and never moving forward.

At the end of 2015, I became obsessed with creating workflows and systems in my business because I knew that was the way to a better business and life. I knew that having them would save me time, and hopefully give me some sanity back.

And they did!! I've been teaching hundreds of photographers my workflow and systems since 2016, and I've watched people literally transform their lives because of it.

I've had people tell me our sessions together have saved their marriages, have kept them from shutting their business down because of burn out, have given them the ability to actually be present with their families on a regular basis, and I've seen countless people EXPLODE their businesses because of the elevated client experience they give due to having a consistent workflow. I personally have created over $80,000 in revenue in one year ONLY from word of mouth referrals, all due to things that happen with my consistent workflow.

The pages to follow contain my top 10 tips for photographers to instantly save time and get ahead of your to-do list. Make sure you read the actual paragraphs and don't just skim the headlines, because that's where the good stuff is and I give a lot of really tangible example of how I do things.

Thanks again for downloading!

Here's to less work and more life!

Laura

TIP # 1

SET REALISTIC DEADLINES.

I think people tend to see their to-do list after sessions and think that EVERY-THING NEEDS TO BE DONE right now. We just make long lists of everything that needs to be done and then we work and work and work until it's finished. This is not a great way to run your business. Your to-do list, or your project work-flow needs to be built out day by day so you know where to stop each day. Set realistic deadlines and know how long things take to do. Don't put more tasks on your list for the day than there are hours in the day!

Have a checklist for each day of your workflow and be realistic about it. Don't put edit full wedding gallery, design album, and post blog on one list. Break them up into smaller subtasks and then divvy it up over the course of a week or two.

Having a stopping point will give you the ability to calmly walk away from the to-do list, feeling confident that you'll be able to pick up tomorrow where you left off today, and still get everything done on time.

Want mrore tips on time management? Click here to read the grab your free guide: **5 Ways to Master your Time, Schedule and To-Do List.**

TIP # 2

GET THE RIGHT TOOLS.

This seems like a no-brainer but having the tools to make your business efficient on a daily basis is absolutely essential for success. I am shocked every time I hear photographers tell me that they're culling in Lightroom, collaging pictures in Photoshop (or worse, editing pictures one by one in Photoshop), designing albums in InDesign or keeping track of their clients with paper to do-lists, contracts, invoices and a file folder system in their closet (or under their bed if you're like me 5 years ago!)

There are dozens of tools out there LITERALLY made to make your life easier. And it's vital to your sanity and your success that you use them, because these tools will help you remain efficient, and productive with all of your photography tasks. I also feel it's important to note that you know how to USE these programs. I've seen photographers who've been using them for years still floundering with them. Read the basics and you'll work so much quicker because of it.

The following pages contain a list of the essential tools and software I couldn't run my business without and a brief description on what it's used for.

HONEYBOOK

Honeybook is the client management system where I keep all my projects. Every client has it's own workspace, and within it are their contract, invoices, questionnaires, timelines, important notes and contact information. Their workflows are dynamically built from when the workflow is applied, to delivery of their gallery after their project date. At any given time, (even on mobile) I can see what's due for the client, if any payments are overdue or are about to come in, get reports on income and booking rates, and so much more. My business could not run without this incredible software.

To get 50% off, or to learn more, click here!

PHOTOMECHANIC

Photomechanic is the culling software I use to pretty much cull as quickly as my brain can process images! Unlike Lightroom, or other editing softwares, Photomechanic renders images immediately so you don't have to wait for the pixels to load. I calculated once that waiting for Lightroom to load and render pictures while culling alone was costing me 55 hours a year of waiting. That's literally insane!!!

LIGHTROOM

Lightroom is my editing software of choice and is the top choice for nearly all photographer's that need to edit multiple images at once. In Lightroom you can batch edit (which means syncing your edits across multiple photos) once you get the edit right on one which is a tremendous time saver! It's also amazing for organization and serves as a catalog and home base for all your images from a session.

SMART ALBUMS

Smart albums allows you to design albums at the speed of light by dynamically creating spread layouts. Just drag the images you want onto a blank spread and the software will lay them out for you with perfect edges and borders. You can easily crop, edit, straighten and swap out pictures on every page and then when the design draft is complete, you just send it off to your client for comments and they can comment directly on the design so editing is a piece of cake! No lie- it takes us approximately 10 minutes to design albums at Laura Lee Photography once the images are selected and maybe 5-10 to make album changes once the client submits feedback!

BLOGSTOMP

Oy! I literally cringe thinking about what I was doing 5 years ago. I bought a bunch of collage templates off Etsy and I was photoshopping all my image collages and then uploading them to the blog. No wonder I never wanted to blog! Blogstomp allows you to import all the pictures that are going to be posted on your blog, and similar to Smart Albums, you just select the pictures you want to collage and it instantly creates a layout for you! Your images are ready to be blogged, and crunched down to size in a matter of minutes.

GOOGLE DRIVE

I couldn't live without Google Drive honestly! Since I use Gmail, this is where I store all of my documents. I can easily write blog posts, share them with my team to get formatted, or send client's timelines and have them comment directly. I store all types of things here and love how easy it is to use.

COSCHEDULE

Who wants to get up at 7:00AM to manually post their blogs? No one. Who wants to go into social media daily to post? No one. I hope not anyway- it's a rabbit hole! Coschedule allows you to schedule all of your social media posts, and sync with your blog to post your blog post with a social message to all your relevant platform. Automation at your fingertips! Click

here to start your free trial!

PLANOLY

Since Instagram doesn't let you schedule automatically to the app, you need to use a third party planning app such as Planoly to schedule your images and captions and then a notification will pop up to post to Instagram. I love Planoly because I love designing my grid, and they have a simple to use platform for designing and scheduling posts!

Click **here** to start your free trial!

ASANA

Asana is my go-to task management system for anything that doesn't have to do with a client workflow. (Although I have all my clients workflows in here too if I need to assign tasks to my team, Asana is the best way to do that.

I have boards and lists set up for all the different projects I'm working on (client or non client related) and then I can assign due dates, team members to handle the task, and so much more! Asana keeps my entire master list of tasks in there and I have different "teams within it such as Photography, Personal, Laura Lee Creative, Educational Courses, etc.

4 DRIVE LEXAR HUB CARD READER

I remember the days all too well of staying up late after a 10 hour wedding day to load all the memory cards. All I wanted to do was sleep but I knew if I didn't get everything backed up right after, I'd be tossing and turning all night!

That was until I discovered Lexar's 4 Bay card reader hub! I can plug 4 memory cards in at one time, hit ingest in Photomechanic and go to bed! In the morning, all my photos will be imported in their proper client folder! Game changing!! Note* You need the hub and card readers which can be found at those links! If you're a CF card user, use this link, for SD, use this link!

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TIP # 3

ONLY CULL AND EDIT IN SUBFOLDERS

Overwhelm happens when there is just WAY TOO MUCH work in front of you. Sometimes, it makes it hard to even get started, and then our brain tends to shut down, and we get behind, and the cycle runs over and over. This is why, throughout EVERY part of my workflow, things are broken down into smaller tasks, sections, and subfolders.

When culling, before you begin, take your entire import and then sort them into subfolders for the different sections of the day. If you do this in Photomechanic, it will transfer over to your Lightroom so you can then edit in those subfolders. Now you only need to match the edits to each section of the day individually, vs trying to sync edits from different lighting scenarios. This will DRASTICALLY reduce your overwhelm and help you create a positive momentum with your workflow and tasks.

TIP # 4

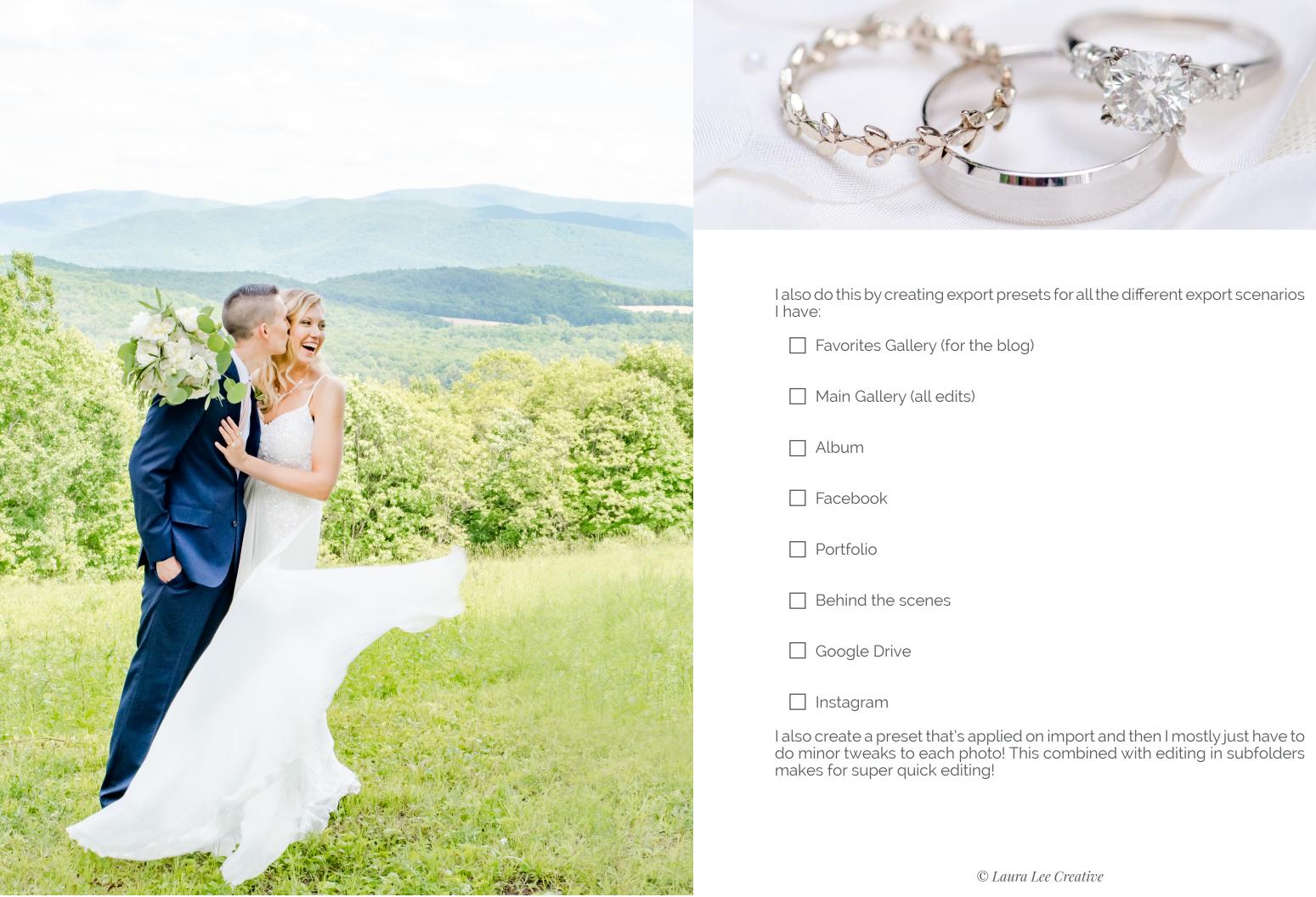## DO SMART PREP WORK TO SAVE YOU TIME ON EVERY SESSION

Do smart prep work to either save you time or completely eliminate steps from your workflow.

I did this in my photo business in a few ways. The first is by creating a "Folder to Copy". This folder has all the subfolders I will ever need for a client's wedding or portrait session rather than creating a new folder every time I have a session. I have one folder to copy for weddings, one for engagements, and one for brand sessions. I then go onto my harddrive when I'm ready to import a new session, Copy my "Folder to Copy" and rename it for the new client.

Now, when I'm exporting things for the Main Gallery, or the Blog, I don't need to create a subfolder for these items because they were already created! I did this prep work ONE TIME and now it saves me time for every single session.

I also do this by creating export presets for all the different export scenarios I have:

☐ Favorites Gallery (for the blog)

☐ Main Gallery (all edits)

☐ Album

☐ Facebook

☐ Portfolio

☐ Behind the scenes

☐ Google Drive

☐ Instagram

I also create a preset that's applied on import and then I mostly just have to do minor tweaks to each photo! This combined with editing in subfolders makes for super quick editing!

TIP # 5

CULL BACKWARDS TO FORWARDS

I learned this one when I was working at a commercial studio and all the photographers used to take dozens of test shots to test the lighting. When they went to give me the final shots to edit (I was a photo editor there) they would just pick the last photo in the bunch cause they knew that was the money shot! *Face palm moment*

If you're anything like me, you probably do the same whether it's testing white balance, exposure, poses, detail shots etc. (It might not be 30 test shots but it may be 5 or so! Especially with invitation shots, I always take it crooked the first like 8 times ha! Is this just me?)

The last shot is always the best because after I nail it, I move onto the next! So culling backwards means you're getting your best shot first and then can skip the rest of that same pose or detail layout.

I also do this because culling the Reception is my least favorite part. I like the bridal details and portraits better which will come toward the middle and end of the workflow if I'm going in backwards order. That way, my least favorite part to cull happens when I have the most mental energy.

TIP # 6

BATCH YOUR TASKS

There are some crazy statistics out there about context switching and "multitasking" but batching is a whole different story. They say switching between tasks can reduce your productivity by 40%, mostly because your brain and body need to detach from the previous task and refocus on the new one.

Think of an airplane. Imagine if it had to take off and land take off and land take off and land over and over? The take off, or the start up of a task, requires the biggest amount of energy. Once it's in the air, it stays there until it's destination is complete.

The same goes for all the tasks you do throughout your day. Imagine how much easier it would be to schedule a week's worth of social media content, or even a month or year in one sitting than to go in and post every day. It saves SO MUCH time doing it all at once because you don't need to start up and stop over and over.

That's why it's so important to BATCH your tasks. I've literally watched people cull before and see them go through a handful of photos, pull one into Lightroom to edit, go back to cull a few more, edit another one, repeat, repeat, repeat. Their brain is switching between culling and editing, culling and editing, and it's slowing them down tremendously.

The next page has a list of things you should batch!

Here is a list of some of the tasks you can and should batch in order to save time, improve focus, and reduce the need for constant busyness.

- ☐ Culling

- ☐ Social Media Caption Writing

- ☐ Social Media Scheduling

- ☐ Creating a content calendar monthly so you don't have to be in brainstorm mode all the time or figure out what to post

- ☐ Designing canva graphics for upcoming newsletters or blog posts

- ☐ Meetings!

- ☐ Writing newsletters or blog posts

- ☐ Email Clean up

- ☐ Bookkeeping

- ☐ Taking flat-lay photos for your blog or instagram

TIP #7

CREATE A 5 PART RATING SYSTEM

Part of your marketing efforts should be blogging and posting pictures to social media, whether it be Facebook, Instagram or both. Since different parts of your workflow require different sized images (Your album spreads are going to be much higher resolution than your Facebook posts), it's important to export them and cull them separately.

I recommend a 5 point culling and rating system for your images.

Everything that is going in the client's gallery gets 1*.

Then, culling from that group of photos, cull even more niche for pictures that are potentially going in the album. I always choose more than what's actually going in so I can play around with horizontal vs. vertical on the album spreads. These should be 2*.

Then culling down even further from your 2* images, cull for the blog using a 3* rating. I also mark these as green in Lightroom by using the "8" on my keyboard so I know at a glance which are going to be blogged and it makes it MUCH easier to sync my main gallery edits to these since I can quickly see color vs searching for the star rating amongst hundreds of photos.

Then, again culling down further, labeling any photos to be published in a Facebook post, Facebook album, or Instagram with a 4* rating.

Then finally, culling from those 4* images and labeling any portfolio worthy images for website and promo images with a 5* rating.

Main gallery - 1*
Album - 2*
Blog - 3* + COLOR
Facebook - 4*
Portfolio- 5*

TIP # 8

CREATE EMAIL TEMPLATES FOR EVERYTHING

The amount of hours we spend in email astounds me. Literally, I think more time is spent in inboxes than on our actual craft (photography) and that's slightly horrifying! To speed up your email game, AND to up-level your communication, I urge you to create and use email templates for EVERYTHING! You can of course go in and personalize them when needed, but generally, every client should be getting the same emails throughout the course of your workflow.

I've heard so many people say that they just go into their email, look at past sent emails and copy and paste it. That's still wasting SO MUCH TIME!! It takes about 10 extra seconds to create an email template, so next time you're writing an email you know you'll use again, go into the canned responses in gmail and create it as a template. (And if you don't use gmail, figure out how to do it in your email program!)
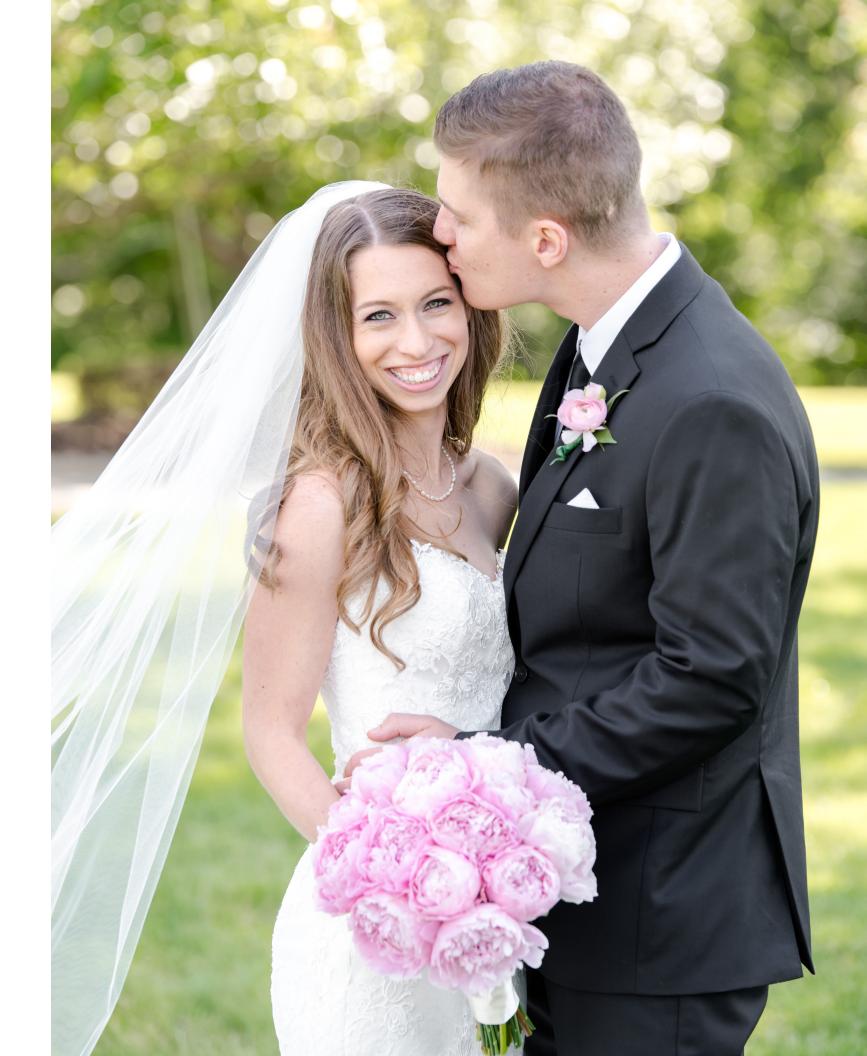
I'd then take it one step further and put these templates into your client management system. Mine are ALL in Honeybook and I can quickly pick a template and hit send and now I spend very very minimal time in my inbox and it's SO FREEING. One of the key reasons for that, as well, is that I communicate to my clients before the questions even come in. I try to be proactive with my communication vs. reactive.

While I have 200+ email templates in Honeybook (I told you I literally have everything in there!), here's a quick summary of what you should have:

- ☐ Inquiry email
- ☐ Follow up #1
- ☐ Follow up #2
- ☐ Setting up time to call
- ☐ Thank you for speaking
- ☐ Thank you for booking
- ☐ What to think about in coming months
- ☐ Links to helpful blogs you've written
- ☐ Vendor recommendations
- ☐ Your wedding has been blogged!
- ☐ Your wedding gallery is live!
- ☐ Product ordering information if they didn't order an album or products
- ☐ Album draft is ready + how to make edits
- ☐ Wedding timeline ready for review
- ☐ Your album has shipped
- ☐ Final thank you note
- ☐ Make sure products have arrive

If writing emails isn't your thing, click **HERE** to browse the shop to purchase my email templates for weddings, portraits, album design and client education!

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TIP #9

DON'T DO
IT ALL

Okay, I know this might feel like cheating to some people, but I highly recommend NOT doing it all. Outsourcing certain things in my business has freed me up to do the things I really love, like shooting more, blogging, networking with other vendors, giving attention to my clients.

I recommend writing down a list of EVERYTHING you do in your business and then go through and rate everything 1-5. 1 being you don't like it, 5 being you love it. What do you love and what do you dislike or hate doing? All the things that were rated 1-2 got the cut.

It can be hard to pay someone to do something you're capable of, but think of the time you can gain back with your family, friends, and just time to yourself if you outsource some things.

Here are the things I outsourced initially, that I'd recommend considering yourself!
•   Editing full galleries
•   Album Design
•   Bookkeeping
•   Accounting + Taxes

Note: I know the fears and pushbacks when it comes to outsourcing:
•   I don't have money to outsource
•   They can't do it as good as me
•   I don't have time to teach someone how to do it my way
•   I don't want to look like I can't handle it all
•   I don't want to give up the reigns in my business

However, if you free up even ten hours a week to stop editing, can you imagine what you could do for your business in that 10 hours? You could easily market enough to book a new client to pay for that outsourcing, or network with a new vendor you want to work with and build a connection. Outsourcing, when done correctly, is a return on your investment and a return on your time.

TIP # 10

WRITE OUT YOUR WORKFLOW, AND SYSTEMS

And here's the biggest one. WRITE OUT your workflow, and your system for doing things. I can't say this enough that having your workflow written out, and on a digital platform that you can duplicate for every client will just change the game for you. I recommend putting your workflow into your client management system if the option is there. Mine is ALL in Honeybook, including emails that need to be sent, tasks that need to be completed, questionnaires that need to be sent, and everything in between. If your system doesn't have this option, I recommend putting it into a free task management software such as Asana or Trello as a template that you can duplicate over and over every time you have a client.

My start to finish workflow is 142 steps but I can literally spend just a few minutes a day on admin work for the pre-wedding because it's all systematized and then come time for post production, having a workflow allows me to ALWAYS know what step is next and what needs to be done so I can FLY through my tasks with laser focus.

Most weeks, I shoot weddings on Saturday and am done with them by Tuesday afternoon. They're off to my editor, they're already blogged, the social media is scheduled, the gallery of favorites is sent out to vendors, the album design in underway and all I have to do is export it and upload to the gallery when I get my catalog back.

Since implementing the workflow I currently have, I've booked over $80,000 in referral revenue from my bride's alone. IN ONE YEAR. Why? Because my client experience has gone through the roof! I now have a consistent workflow that's applied to every client that I know is powerful and it works!

My couples get their galleries either on their honeymoon or right when they return, while the wedding haze is still very much apparent. They haven't moved on to buying a house or moving or all the adult things that are to come for them! Not to mention, getting the blog up immediately allows everyone at the wedding, including vendors to be excited about it because they haven't been to another wedding yet and this is still fresh in their mind!

So, if you're looking to create your own workflow, here's what you need to do:

1. Write out your flow of tasks.
2. Set deadlines for each day. Make sure you have a stopping point.
3. Break it up into small tasks. Rather than edit wedding, write out edit Bride Prep, Edit Bridal details, etc.
4. Don't reinvent the wheel every time you shoot a session or wedding. Create a template that you can use over and over again on a digital platform that allows you to cross things off! You can also use a paper to-do list in tandem with it.

Want to join me for a free masterclass on how I want from "Overwhelmed to Organized" and saved up to 30 hours a week? Click here to register!!!

YOU MADE IT!

WANT TO TAKE YOUR WORKFLOW AND SYSTEMS TO THE NEXT LEVEL? CHECK OUT THE [SHOP HERE](#) AND USE THE CODE 10HACKS FOR 20% OFF ANY WORKFLOW CHECKLISTS OR ANY TEMPLATE!