

observations about those businesses as you did with the first set. What impressions do you get from looking at the outside of their buildings?

When you walk in the front door, do you get the same sense of quality and value? What about the people shopping there...do they have the same style of shoes, and the same models of cars? Walk around the store a bit, and get a real good sense of *who* it is they want to attract into their building. It won't take you long to grasp what the marketing plan is of the big discount stores, High volume, low price...load 'em up...move 'em in...move 'em out...YeeHaw!

What does *your* perfect client look like? Is it someone who shops at Ralph Lauren and pays with a Discover Card, someone who shops at the warehouse stores, or is it an amalgamation of


both? Remember there *is* a difference between the type of client you may have today, and the client you want for tomorrow. It's all part of knowing what you want out of your life and business, and having a clear vision of your future.

Once this step is complete, go back to your studio and spend a few minutes reviewing these observations. That sharp pain you will feel in your brain will only be temporary! It will go away as you begin to view the world through the eyes of your perfect client, and gain a fresh understanding of the way perceptions are created.

Your mind will undoubtedly have an enhanced sense of your surroundings and you will begin to see the world just a little bit differently than you did before. This is a good thing! The goal through this entire process is to learn to see the world, and your studio the

way a prospective client sees it.

Next month in Part II of the "5-Second Image Challenge", we will dive in with both feet and take a look at your business with your new eyes! At the end of this process you will have a competitive edge that will take your business to the next level of success and profitability, and separate yourself from the rest of the pack!

They say that it's lonely at the top... but the lunches are much better! Good luck and Power Selling! 

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DID YOU REALIZE that as human beings and consumers we make mental judgements about things in our world within 5 seconds of seeing, feeling, hearing, smelling, or tasting something? We make a decision in our subconscious mind about what kind of value something has for our life. In today's challenging world of professional photography, the old saying "first impressions make lasting impressions" is more important than ever before!

have a tendency of becoming subjective observers of our business, but for this exercise we want you to be able to step out of your shoes and into the shoes of that exact client you want to attract.

Whether you realize it or not, people make those same judgements about your business every day. Are you making the best possible first impression on your potential customers, or is there room for improvement? Those impressions begin the first time someone

ty available! Take a couple of hours on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon, and go to the local mall where the elite stores are located...Nordstrom's, The Bon, Pier 1 Imports, The Sharper Image, Ralph Lauren, Polo...I want you to take a notepad so you can write down anything that strikes your fancy. Notice their signage, the colors and fonts in their logo, the smells as you walk in the front door, the overhead music that's playing, the way they have their displays organized, etc.. Colors and smells

The "5 Second Image Challenge" Part 1

Our first perceptions are always the strongest, and tend to stick with us the longest. Perception is reality. If you want to be viewed as a professional you must dress, act, and be professional. If you walk into a wedding consultation or a portrait viewing with a 25-cent pen and expect them to spend \$5000, you have a better chance of becoming the Pope! Something as simple as a pen can paint a picture in your client's mind, either a positive image or a negative one. If you are the \$99 wedding photographer then a 25-cent pen will be more than sufficient, but if you have bigger fish to fry, you need to be aware of what is happening with those dynamics and perceptions.

Would you like to revitalize your business and re-energize your creative juices? This exercise will do just that! We are going to immerse ourselves in the field of marketing for a little while, and take the "5-Second Image Challenge". Taking an up-close-and-personal look at every aspect of what your business looks like, sounds like and feels like to a potential client is a vital ingredient in your recipe for success. We

hears your name, or sees your sign, or hears your voice on the phone, or walks into your place of business! It's all part of the "Wonderful World of Marketing"!

Good marketing is how you create value for yourself and your products. It creates a demand for your product long before the phone ever rings or the client walk in the door. It has been said that the sales process ends when the client writes you a check. Well, everything that happens up to that point determines how much that check will be. That's where the image-creation and marketing comes in. The better job you can do with building a strong image in the mind of your customers, the higher the value your products and services will have.... and the bigger the checks will become!

Let's get to work!

Step 1: The Image Inventory

Before we can take a look into your business with an open and objective frame of mind, let's go see how other top-notch businesses handle this issue, and expose ourselves to the best quali-

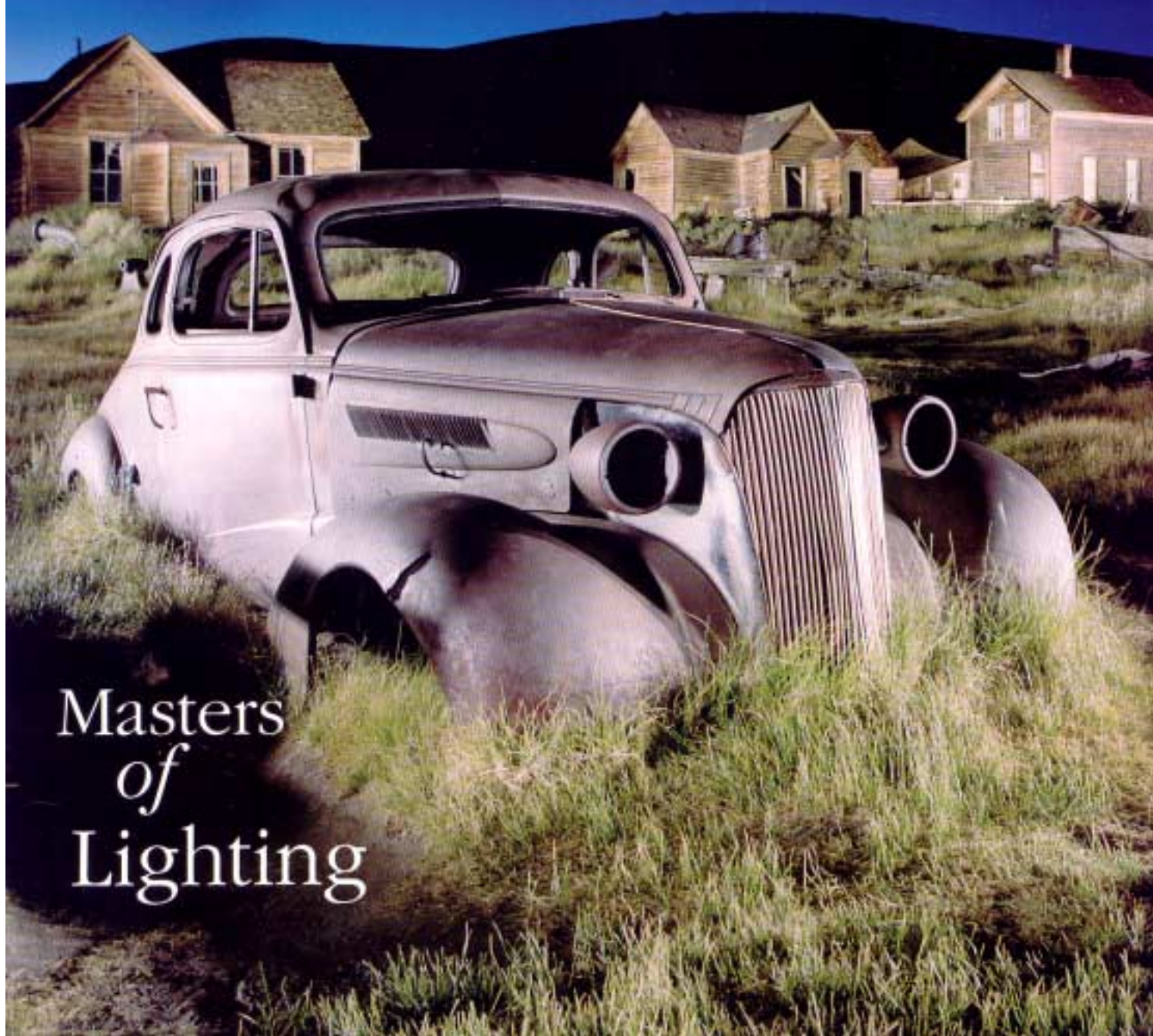
ty affect our emotions in a very big way, and all play a key role is the value we attached to things we observe.

Once you have a good handle on your environment, take a look at the people who are shopping there. What type of clothes are they wearing, what style of shoes do they have on, their hairstyles, the age range, the color of the woman's purses, or the brand of the men's jeans, notices the model of cars they are driving, and what colors seem to be the most popular? Anything about those customers you can identify.... Put it on paper! If you see something that will work great for you, write it down! Stop by a nice art gallery, or a fine furniture store, or maybe stop into one of the upscale studios in your area. Make the same mental notations about what you observe there. There are plenty of great marketing ideas we can find just by looking around at the world around us.

After spending a couple of hours going in and out of several stores of this class, drive yourself over to the local department store...Wal-Mart, Kmart, or the local 5 and dime. Make the same

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55.00/SEPTEMBER 2003 ■ THE MAGAZINE FOR PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS



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