

Long Range Planning Committee Notes

July 27, 2009

The Long Range Planning Committee of the Professional Photographers of NC met on July 27. The committee discussed the current trends in the photography industry. Those listed were:

- Everyone with a digital camera thinks they are a photographer
- There is no concern for quality
- Everyone wants fine portraits at Wal-Mart prices
- There is a lack of understanding of the craft by the public
- Sponsorships are drying up
- More amateurs
- There are more destination weddings
- Customer digital cameras have resulted in less senior portraits, less children's business, smaller orders from customers, and more copyright infringement
- The economy is causing an influx of "newbie's"
- Digital technology requires constant education
- There is a get it cheap mentality among customers

The committee then listed the above affects on PPNC and also rated the seriousness of the effects based on the following scale.

Light – 1-20

Mild – 21-40

Moderate – 41-60

Serious – 61-80

Drastic – 81-100

The scores were then averaged and rated on a scale 1-10.

1. Economy – 4.75
2. Digital information on the Internet has caused everyone to be self professed photographic artists. - 3.5
3. More women members – 1.1
4. More part-timers at convention – 3.0
5. Attendance at events less during the week – 2.2
6. More part-time newbie's – 4.5
7. Greater need for education by current members – 4
8. New members come and go as newbie's realize the effort it takes to remain in business – 4
9. Lack of understanding of good quality photography and more of a concern to be "hip/cool" – 4.5
10. Old members are not renewing because of lost business - 2.3
11. New photographers feel they do not need education – 4
12. Influx of newbie's are potential members for the association – 3

13. Potential members are competing for \$ of established members which are having to cut back on education, dues, etc. - 4
14. More transient members – 2
15. Lack of PPA support for our profession – 4.5
16. PPA's association goals have diminished the professional photographer – 3.5
17. Reduced sponsorship – 3.75
18. Hotel expenses are worse – 2.9

Four areas were established and suggestions were made:

Finance – PPNC will need to reduce spending. The Finance and Budget Committee will address this.

Membership - We must continue to be inclusive with our membership. Should send an exit interview form when members do not renew to PPNC. That way we could find out why members leave. Need to make sure we offer as much value as possible to our members.

Education - Discussion was held about giving active members one free guild registration outside of their home area. Or, pay for two and receive three.

Must learn to deal with rock star photographers. PPNC must continue to offer quality education. Education and networking should be tied together.

Marketing - We need to be more assertive with marketing. Should email teasers. Need to change our marketing materials.

The Long Range Plan for 2008 was reviewed and items completed were marked off.

1. Marketing
 - a. Get the website more oriented to the consumer. Work on ways to promote PPNC members to the consumer. This could be a huge membership benefit. It was suggested to use the PPA website as a guide. *Mike Brantley was appointed to work with Jeff Burton on this project. He will have a report at the October Board Meeting. COMPLETED*
 - b. Have the newsletter PDF posted on the website and e-mailed to the members done in color. *Loretta has spoken with Fuller Royal and future newsletters posted on the website will be in color. We will continue to print the newsletter in black and white. COMPLETED*
2. Nondues Revenue
 - a. Add more value to the sponsorship packages we offer. *Loretta Byrd will review the current plans and see if there are additional benefits that can be added. IN PROCESS*
 - b. Secure more sponsors that are new. We cannot depend on the old ones such as Fuji, Kodak, etc. *This is an ongoing process. Sponsors usually are linked to the speakers that are held at the convention. In order to get more sponsors, attendance must be increased at all events. IN PROCESS*
A discussion was held about the purpose of the guild meetings. The question was: Are they to raise money or a member benefit? Discussion was held about offering one free guild meeting to all members per year. The free guild could not be in the members' home guild.

SUGGESTIONS: If you pay up front, buy 2 get one free - \$175.00 by January 15.

*It was felt that the new committee the board recently created will be a great help to the seminar chairs. Loretta will work on a better training manual for the chairs which can be updated by the Guild Committee. **IN PROCESS***

*Loretta Byrd and James Becton were instructed to develop a member survey that targets the guilds. Some suggestions for questions were: Number of years in business, number of years a PPNC member, If you did not attend the May guild meeting, why not, Location, Money, Program talent, photography job prohibited, family commitment prohibited
Was also suggested that we find out what programs the members want to see. **COMPLETED***

3. Membership Recruitment and Retention

- a. Improve New Member Orientation – Do a PowerPoint of way PPNC operates. *James and Loretta were instructed to work on developing a Power Point to educate new members. This could be something that is emailed to them when they become members.*
- b. Do a video illustrating the value of PPNC membership- **DELETED**

Discussion was held concerning the video. The consensus was the Video should have a script with actors. Loretta was asked to contact Jim Allen to see if he could help us and how much would he charge.

*It was also determined that there should also be a consumer video on the website discussing why you should hire a professional photographer who is a PPNC member. This should be a part of the new consumer page on the website. **IT WAS SUGGESTED TESTIMONALS BE PUT ON THE WEBISTE.***

- c. Put new members to work. Add them to committees

*It was decided to assign each new member to a convention committee. **ON GOING***

- d. Communicate with the members better. *Discussion was held about assigning a PPNC Buddy to each new member. This is not a mentor, but a person to call them and invite them to events and answer any PPNC questions. **DELETED***

- e. Discussion was held about ways to reach non PPNC members.

*It was decided to plan and implement a PPNC Road Tour. Each guild will be broken into regions. Speakers will be chosen to go to the cities within the regions to give a three – four hour class held at camera stores, arts councils, and camera clubs. This will be for non PPNC members. James Becton volunteered to chair this committee and will be working on developing the program. More information will be available at the October meeting. **INSTEAD OF THE ROAD TOUR, IT WAS SUGGESTED PPNC NEEDS TO GET CONNECTED WITH UNIVERSITIES AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES WHICH HAVE A PHOTOGRAPHY DEGREE.***

Discussion was also held about selecting a group of photographers – two from each region to recruit. Seasoned members helping recruit add credibility to PPNC. The PPNC Directors should be pushing PPNC in their guild.

4. Other

PPNC should begin working on ways to advertise Professional Photography to the public. PPNC should become more consumer oriented and friendly.

DISCUSSION WAS HELD ABOUT ADDING AN INTRO PAGE TO THE WEBSITE. IT WOULD PLAY MUSIC AND SCROLL THROUGH IMAGES. LOAN COLLECTION, 1ST, 2ND, 3RD PLACE IMAGES. THERE WOULD BE AN OPTION TO SKIP THE INTRO.

SUGGESTION WAS ALSO MADE TO ADD TO THE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION THE COMMITTEES AND ASK NEW MEMBERS WHAT AREA THEY WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER.

There will be a Board Training and Board and Long Range Planning Retreat in 2010. It is time that PPNC does another SWOT analysis and develop another ongoing plan. Loretta Byrd was instructed to get this set up.