

# Product Photography in the Agriculture Industry

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The E-commerce space is growing and E-commerce is dependent upon product photography. The product photograph is one of the most important elements of an online visual marketing strategy. When selling online, the only sense a customer can use to judge the product is sight. The picture is what your customers will utilize to decide whether they want to purchase the product or not. In the 2017 Bazaarvoice's Shopper Experience Index, product photos are shown to be able to create a 111% conversion boost and a 180% revenue boost per visitor for top retailers and brands. The picture of a product can make or break whether somebody will buy or not. This is why the quality of the product photo is so important. Also, everyone's time is valuable and people may not have the skills, time, or studio to take the high quality product photos they need.

The author has always had an eye for photography, but she has only pursued her photography as a hobby. For this senior project, The author will start her own photography business where she will provide product photography services to agriculture related companies. At the completion of this project, she will have a website with a portfolio of product photography from 10 clients, and her business will be up and running. This business is a good way for people in agriculture to not have to deal with the hassle of taking high quality product photos on their own. The website will include a blog that will help bridge the gap between the general population and agriculture. The author hopes her business will increase online sales through aesthetically pleasing product photography.

## METHODOLOGY

There are three main steps to creating a commercial photography business. The steps are to research, to build the business, and to do client based projects. The first step is researching. Observe the ways in which their company is excelling while also paying attention to areas that may need improvement. It is important to research what type of business the business should be established as (sole proprietor, LLC, etc.). Be aware of the legalities of establishing a photography business. Research different types of website building platforms and find one that is best for you to build your website on. Create a business name for your company.

After some research is done, there are multiple steps to building the photography business. The first is purchasing the right equipment. Equipment may include but is not limited to a camera, lenses, lighting, a product box, a tripod, and any other background setups for your studio. For commercial photography purposes, lighting is key. Next, take pictures of agriculture related products in your studio to build your portfolio and to learn how to take product photos. Once you take those photos, find local companies to reach out to to take their product photography for free to build your portfolio and credibility. Once you have taken product photos for those clients, build your website. On your website it is important to have a home page, an about page, a services page, a portfolio page(s), and a contact page. Buy a domain and incorporate it into your website and email. Build a logo for your business then add it to your website. Create an instagram to showcase your work to a broader audience. Grow the instagram to be able to get future gigs through the platform.

Now it is time to start charging. Find businesses who need your service. Start local for commercial photography. For product photography, find ecommerce clients on Amazon, Etsy, or any other ecommerce platform and sell to them. Target them through email. In the email, explain the importance of content and how good content can help businesses to sell more. Tell these businesses that it is more efficient to have you take the time to take their pictures than the businesses to take the time to take the pictures themselves. These are the simplified steps to creating your commercial photography business.

## RESULTS

The website can be found at [somerdayshots.com](http://somerdayshots.com). After targeting many local businesses in the San Luis Obispo County area, the goal of gathering ten clients for product photography was reached. Out of phone calls, emails, and social media outreach, the use of Instagram was the most successful in gathering clients. Photos were taken in the digital media lab on Cal Poly's campus and edited in PhotoShop. Customers were satisfied with the results. Whalebird Kombucha's Founder, Mike Durighello, was pleased with his product photos and gave this review: "Madison is a complete joy to work with. With minimal direction from me, she took excellent product shots for our new online kombucha store and got them back to me in record time. With Madison on your side you will get it done right the first time." Whalebird Kombucha later asked for more product photos to be taken for a new kombucha line, a few months after their initial product photos were taken.



## REFERENCES

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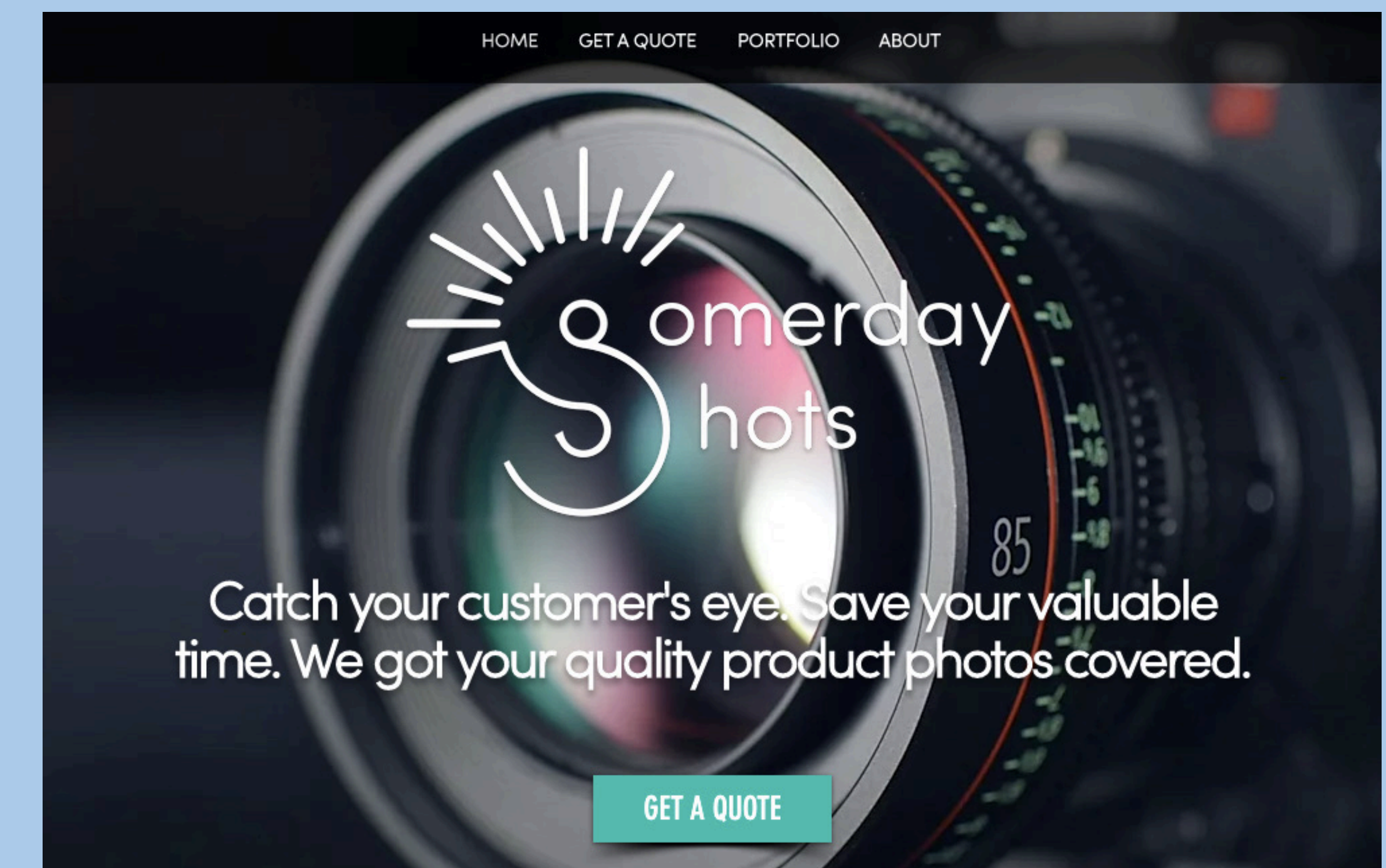
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## CONCLUSION

From prospecting clients, to picking up/dropping off products, to taking and editing product photos, this type of photography business is timely. It is difficult to do as a one-man team on top of other personal responsibilities that need to be met outside of the business. It was also a challenge to find clients in SLO county that wanted product photography, whether it appeared on their website that they needed it or not. If this project were to be done again, it would be better done in a metropolitan area with more local opportunities. All aspects of this business from the sales to the actual photography was enjoyable, but if someone wants to start a business like this, they need to have enough time on their hands to pursue the business to its full potential.

All photographer's need to have knowledge of good lighting to take good photos, but with product photography, lighting is even more crucial. Access to a studio with good lighting equipment is necessary. Taking photos of glass bottles is a steep learning curve, as it is difficult to get good lighting on the bottle without having bad reflections.

Even though there were some challenges, it was great to overcome them and this was a successful experience. No customer complaints were made, only praises. Starting this business was a great learning experience and fun. Many skills were learned that are transferable to the working world.



Top left picture: Whalebird Kombucha



Top Right Picture: Kandarian Organic Farms

Bottom Picture: Yes Cocktail Co.

