

TIME COST CHECKLIST FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHER

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PROFESSIONAL TIME TRACKING

Attorneys, consultants, and accountants track every minute of client work - often in 6-minute increments. Why? Because time is their most valuable asset. Your time is no different. As a creative professional, you deserve to know exactly how much time each client requires so you can price accordingly. This isn't being "greedy" - it's being professional.

NOTES: **Be honest with your time.** You may want to keep a notebook with you to keep track of how much time it takes to accomplish any given client specific task. We have a finite amount of time on this earth it's important to include all the little tasks that we tend to overlook in our daily business dealings with our clients. Keep track of your time, it's much like tracking what you eat in a food diary – we tend to grossly underestimate the time we actually spend conducting business. If this is the case it's time to re-evaluate your business model and how you price.

TIP: Do this for 3-5 client sessions to get the most accurate time estimation. For each session you conduct add the time spent for each client and divide by the number of sessions you have kept track of. For best results I suggest using a variety of sessions you typically shoot (a family session + a newborn session + a session with one child + a session with siblings or any variation of). Using a variety of sessions will allow you to get an accurate picture of how much time you truly spend working with your client.

Date of Session: _____ Checklist # _____

Client's name: _____

Type of session (circle one): Maternity Newborn Single Child Siblings Family Senior Session Engagement

Session Extended Family (> 6 people) Other: _____

TIP: for simplicity's sake use minutes when documenting time spent (i.e.: 2 hours 5 mins = 125 minutes)

_____ **Pre-session** contact time with client (includes time for pre-session interviews, setting up the session, phone time, email time, payment, what to wear/expect discussions, assistance with outfit selections, sample work meetings, etc.)

_____ **Prep time** (getting gear/equipment together and time to prep prior to Travel Time)

_____ **Travel time** (time it takes to get to and back from a session)

_____ **Shoot time** (time in front of the camera with client)

_____ **Computer time post-session** (include time for transferring files to computer, culling images, editing images, resizing/prepping images for presentation, ordering/burning images, etc.)

_____ **Post-session communication time with client** email/text/phone with client post-session. Any need for contract/invoice processing time (digital contract signing, invoice creation/sending, payment processing follow-up, etc.)

_____ **Computer time (all) session-specific:** social media/blog posts, sneak peeks, etc

_____ **Ordering session time spent** (phone call? In person, add any add'l travel time. Time spent obtaining any payments. Time spent ordering from lab. Time spent talking to lab. Etc etc.

_____ **Physical packaging/shipment time** (include any travel to/from shipping service)

_____ **Follow up** time (thank you notes, follow up phone call/email, etc)

_____ Any **miscellaneous time** not included (i.e.: you need to drive to the office supply store for envelopes for shipping items to client or your client needs extra hand holding at some point in the process or perhaps you need to drive your children to the sitters at some point during this process to get your work done. **Include it all** – you want a realistic breakdown of how much time you spend)

_____ **TOTAL # OF MINUTES** Add up the **total number of minutes**

...NOW divide that TOTAL # OF MINUTES by 60 to get your hours + minutes that you spent conducting this session for this client

_____ TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS + MINUTES

Do this same thing for 3-5 sessions and figure out your average time per client to get a realistic idea of how much time you spend working.

((EXAMPLE : If you make \$500 for a session and you spend 25 hours working...pre-tax, pre-COGs and pre-costs of doing business you make \$20/hour. This is BEFORE you factor in your costs of running a business day to day (all those pesky numbers like equipment costs, vehicle costs, lab costs, taxes, insurance, saving for retirement, etc. etc.) Only YOU can decide if these numbers work for you.))

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