Summary for janelc

**by Jim Lee**

*Hi Jane! I understand that you’d like my advice regarding the sales of your ‘luma image’ photographs. I’ve perused your site and message. Below are my thoughts:*

First of all, I’d like to say that your images are very nice. With this being said, I’d like to say that the bulk of your questions are hinged upon the subjectivity of the customer. I’ll elaborate on this later. In the meanwhile, let me comment on your specific questions chronologically.

“It is a series of floral and scenic images with my style of detail, clarity and light.”

This is good, and is a unique selling point. Of course, the images should speak for themself… if the customer likes it, they like it - and vice versa. Aside from that, metallic photo paper is a novelty because most people aren’t acutely familiar with it. I know you have a blurb on the home page, but I feel you should highlight this difference more… as it’s an intriguing selling point. Perhaps you could have a static announcement bar at the top of your site (one that isn’t gaudy or intrusive) that explicitly says something like: ‘How are Luma Images different from traditional photos?’ This announcement would link to your features & benefits.

Remember, customers are inherently drawn to the benefits more than the features… as the features are merely a means to an end. It’s the benefits they want, and as such, this is what you should emphasize. For example, a Dyson vacuum cleaner may have strong suction, modern design, etc. - but ultimately, the customer buys it because it cleans well, is easy to use/maneuver, and perhaps the modern design (high ticket price) represents their ‘high social class’ to their friends. Anyway, the benefits are something you should always focus on… and this certainly applies to the next topic.

“I would like to either get into the home decor market or see them go into a hotel chain, hospital, etc.”

It’s good that you’ve identified your target market. I wouldn’t use the ‘either or’ approach, since it would be limiting your potential reach. Rather, I’d break it down into two categories and attack each independently. Meaning: I’d separate it into the home consumer and business consumer. Right now, as is, your site if focused on the home buyer.

I would create another site dedicated to the business consumer. If you’re concerned about redundancy or don’t want the upkeep of dual sites, at a minimum you can create another domain dedicated to the corporate buyer that then ‘pushes off’ the viewer to your current site.

Implementing the notion I mentioned above about the benefits, I would then make sure that the benefits are tailored specifically to each of these groups. For example: a benefit to a corporate purchaser would be: “the rarity of luma imagery will cause a memorable impression and positive association between your customers and business”.

I won’t go too in depth on this topic, but suffice to say that when you create (and implement) your marketing strategy, this too will logically follow the two-pronged, independent approach. Meaning, the marketing outlets for a home consumer would be presumably different than a corporate consumer. For example, you may advertise via ‘home magazines’ for the general consumer, and a hotel trade show for the hotel businesses.

By the way, I think you can already assume that you may want to incentivize bulk quantity pricing for your corporate customers. If you want to be even more ambitious, you can broaden your offerings by having a subscription pricing - where the business receives the Benefit of ‘fresh’ art, by having a rotation of imagery. In this case, once again they are not ‘buying the art’... rather they are ‘renting’ the art which provides the additional benefits that a fresh rotation can give to their customers/clients. This would be apropos for any business that has a regular, recurring base (like hotel, doctor’s office, etc.).

 “What I need is advice on PRICING and where the best market would be.”

As for the ‘best market’ hopefully, I’ve answered this to your satisfaction in the previous paragraphs. With this being said, if you wanted to focus your efforts acutely in one area, there’s still no perfect answer for this… because we are in the field of art & subjectivity. Meaning, unless you are a famous established name, then the subjective value is up to the purchaser.

To elaborate, if you wanted to focus your efforts on one area… I’d Still start with a blanket (overall) approach. The purpose of this is to distinguish which sector is most responsive to your art… and perhaps a gap (and therefore a potential) may be revealed. Only then, would I put my energy into one area.

An example of the above is Monet. As a world famous painter, one would assume that his paintings have quite a high value. While this is very true, there’s a gap between his ‘Waterlilies’ series and his other work. My point is, as a businesswoman, I’m sure you’d rather be focusing your time & energy on the water lily series as it will produce the best return on your effort.

Now for the pricing, the same philosophy applies as what I’ve said above. Some imagery sells for a pretty penny, and others for a nominal cost - it’s all based on demand… and in the world of subjectivity, this is hard to quantify. The prices you currently have on the site seem reasonable for prints from an unknown artist… you could even go a bit higher. It really depends on your business model and again Demand.

Demand is something yet to be determined, and only after real world implementation will you get a sense of just how much you can increase the price and still retain the critical amount of sales.

Now another approach, independent of demand, is perceptive value. In this model, you are purposely asking a premium price (aka. $1000 a print) with the intent to fabricate implied demand. It’s a psychological fact that people associate a high price with quality. Whether this is true or not is less important… the thing is, you’ll have to approach this marketing strategy from a totally different angle - one that inherently Limits your potential customer target base from the beginning (for example, individuals who have this type of disposable income or 4+ star hotels). Needless to say, this follows the adage of: the risk is higher, but the rewards are greater.

“I also would like advice about what other types of images I should add to support the line.”

This is a great question… and unless you’re trying to build your credibility as a certain type of photographer, then the answer is simple: the more complementary images you offer, the greater the chance of capturing the sale. Logical, complementary offerings would be: people/portraits, abstracts, still-life, animals, the list goes on. As long as it isn’t offensive, and seems to ‘fit’ within your portfolio of offerings, then it’s fair game. One word of warning though - don’t offer anything that seems outside of the range of what fits, as this will only cheapen your overall offerings. This may not be something the potential customer is aware of, but they will respond subconsciously… thereby affecting sales. For example, if a dentist offers at home teeth whitening kits, toothbrushes, oral solutions, etc. - this all fits. If he/she adds dog food to the offerings… everything is off, thereby subconsciously affecting their legitimacy.

“Your thoughts on the best sales rep group or distributor for this new line would be helpful.”

I’m glad you mentioned this… because it shows you are considering implementation at the same time as strategy. Without proper implementation, then a strategy is useless. Suffice to say that any outreach should be tailored to the 2 groups I mentioned prior. No doubt, in a corporate setting, you need to reach the purchasing manager and marketing manager.

You can directly contact potential distributors to create a partnership… or you can hire a team to do this for you. Once again, my next suggestion follows the previous line of logic I’ve established: For the home consumer, you need a team that has a b2c background… and for the the corporate, you want a b2b background. Of course you can have them work on commision… but my advice is not to incentivize based on commision alone - I’ve found that this is not enough motivation for most.

Of course you can also contact hotel art distribution channels and similar. In this case, they are motivated to move your imagery… but they will take a significant cut of your profits.

In summary, you are really in a research phase at this moment. Any strategizing at this point is purely speculation due to the subjective nature of this genre. You should consider your initial implementation as part of this phase to discern more market research - rather than a product launch of a more traditional product.

I hope my advice is helpful Jane… please let me know your thoughts.

Cheers,

Jimmy

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