

MARKETING MADE EASY

Every photographer knows the importance of a good website, but the beauty of a product from Zenfolio is that it makes it easy to market your product, to sell your promotions and to talk to your clients

It's hard to believe that there was ever a debate about whether a photographer should have a website or not. Now it's clear that the whole argument has moved on, and it's no longer about whether you have a site but how hard that site can work for you. A website that does little more than showcase your images in a passive way is not working nearly hard enough, and in an increasingly competitive climate it's crucial to have your business supported in a way that will help you to reach out to your clients and to stay connected to them.

In recent years Zenfolio has firmly established itself as one of the best and most innovative website products that any professional could invest in. With prices that start from just £100 a year, a Zenfolio website will allow you to professionally present photos to your clients and run your entire online business under one roof. Included under its umbrella is a portfolio website, client proofing, your own shopping cart, integration with print labs, fulfilling your own orders and much more.

Very much a worldwide operation these days, Zenfolio is increasingly attracting UK-based professional photographers who are appreciating the advantage that these bespoke websites can deliver to their businesses. An appearance at Focus on Imaging earlier this year helped to convince still more that this company has a real understanding of the requirements of the UK market. One of those to sign up around a year ago was Edinburgh-based Archibald Photography, and owner Donna Marshall has been delighted with the service she's received since and the benefit to her business that the clever features of her Zenfolio website have offered.

"One of the many great things about Zenfolio is you can use as much, or as little, of the software product as you require," says Donna. "Some photographers

“The increase in sales we have experienced has been phenomenal. I put this down to the ease of use of the system for someone making a purchase”



develop a fully customisable website and shopping cart solution quickly and easily while others choose to add the shopping cart facility to an existing website. We are in the latter situation because we came across Zenfolio after we had already commissioned a new website. With our old website we had had a basic shopping cart and with the launch of our new site almost a year ago, we were looking for a more professional-looking solution. Zenfolio offered exactly what we needed as we could customise the look to match the rest of our site, utilise a custom domain name and then let Zenfolio take care of the 'back end' selling part of our business website."

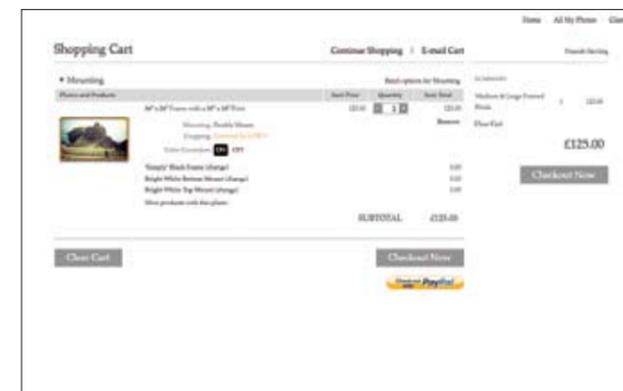
Developing the business

One of the crucial advantages of a Zenfolio website is that it is totally dedicated to increasing your selling power. "Compared to the basic online selling tool we used before, it's like night and day," says Donna. "The increase in sales we have experienced has also been phenomenal, and I put this down to the ease of use

of the system for someone making a purchase. Slide shows are full screen, giving fabulous impact to our images, the system detects which browser a user is viewing from and works seamlessly on mobile devices and our customers can also preview the product they are about to buy. Zenfolio has taken time to research the factors that make a good shopping cart experience with as few check-out steps as possible, and it means that our clients find ordering a very easy and quick process.

"One of the features of Zenfolio that has particularly helped our business is the lab fulfilment option. With our old system, orders would come in by email, we would then place them with our lab and I would spend hours per week unpackaging, checking, repackaging and shipping orders to clients. With Zenfolio, our orders go direct to our chosen partner lab (One Vision) and are sent out directly to our customers. We have been very impressed with the quality of printing and the products that are available, and this direct lab tie-in is saving us hours.

"Unlike many other online sales systems, Zenfolio allows us to mix and match lab fulfilled and self-fulfilled items, so we are not tied into only offering the products that our chosen partner lab offers. If I want to offer a different frame or album that I spot at a trade show, I can add this into the system for sale and fulfil those orders myself."



ABOVE AND LEFT Creating your website with the Zenfolio system is easy, and it's got everything covered, from keywording and shopping carts to slide shows, discounts and vouchers, and talking to your clients. And as Archibald Photography testifies, the video tutorials and help desk service are fantastic.

Another big benefit of the Zenfolio approach is that setting up the selling system is remarkably easy. "No coding was involved," says Donna, "and because I am in full control of the website design I can make further tweaks and changes to the layout or design as I need to. The help section of the Zenfolio site is fantastic, with video tutorials to get you started in designing a site. I had a couple of specific queries on options I wanted to include on our site so I contacted Zenfolio by email. The requests were all possible and I received friendly help within two hours of contacting them.

"We really love the social media integration that the system provides too. Just by clicking on different options, you can choose what social media options you want to include and they appear on your site. This allows our customers to do some of our promotion for us as they share images from a wedding or portrait shoot with their friends and family. Zenfolio also has great SEO tools built into the system, so by easily adding keywords to our galleries it helps with the overall SEO for our website - we rank very highly in Google for our chosen search terms which again helps us generate more revenue as we don't struggle for bookings.

"I know Zenfolio has helped us make more money from our shoots because the sales figures since changing to the Zenfolio system speak for themselves.

"We also use Zenfolio to generate more work because we include portfolio galleries which we can share with potential clients - couples are more likely to book with us if we can show them a portfolio gallery with images from their chosen venue."

Speaking to clients

These days communication with clients is crucial and Zenfolio makes this simple by allowing the photographer to save the email contact details of those who have logged in to preview images or make purchases within the system. "We have made use of this communication tool in a number of different ways with great success," says Donna. "A few examples include sending a reminder email out to tell people that a gallery is about to expire, prompting a rush of sales from clients who had never got round to ordering, or we do 'flash sales' offers which are very popular - say a good discount on canvas wraps for a set short period of time - and we find this generates brilliant additional sales.

"We may also send occasional emails to tell people about product price changes or to update them on other news from the studio. We always offer the option to opt out of receiving further emails and NEVER share details with anyone else.

"The coupons (discount) facility within Zenfolio is also excellent and very flexible, and we make great use of these. We often

provide a discount code for purchases made in the first few weeks from an event, which we find really boosts sales. As you can specify different discount levels, maximum numbers of usage, start and expiry dates, we can customise discount schemes to fit our business needs. We also make use of the packages option for event photography, allowing us to offer special deals on a collection of different sized reprints of one image at a discounted price.

"Overall Zenfolio is a very sophisticated business tool for photographers. When making the decision to change our online sales software, I spent many weeks trialling different packages that are out there in the market. Zenfolio, for us, offered the most flexible solution, with a great user interface for clients at an almost 'too good to be true' price! I now have a special discount code, which I can share with photographer colleagues because I love the product so much, and I believe that it could do a great job for others too."

MORE INFORMATION

www.zenfolio.com
www.archibaldphotography.co.uk

