

ABOUT ME

# INTRODUCE YOURSELF

*Revealing more about yourself online equates to a better chance of being booked, so how do we talk about ourselves? Eight photographers share all*

WORDS **TERRY HOPE** PICTURES **VARIOUS**

**W**e live and work in a competitive online world, where sharing is king. Prospective clients want to know not just that you have the requisite skills, but also who you are, before booking you to record their most personal moments. Hence the rise of the About Me section on photographers' websites. As Donal Doherty stresses (on page 65), this is a crucial section on your site, arguably the most crucial, but that's not to say it's easy to do.

An About Me page shouldn't be an afterthought, or a dry, factual list of dates and achievements. Yes, it requires facts, but it's about personality, your personality. A photo of yourself is a must too. Not including a mugshot is a cardinal sin for someone who earns their living through a visual medium. If you're not confident you can take a decent picture of yourself, how can you convince anyone else that you can create a wonderful image of them?

But what kind of picture? Certainly not a passport or photo booth pose, instead think about the kind of image you'd use for a dating site - it might be a crude analogy, but there are similarities. On a dating site and on your website, you want people to like you, so present a friendly, approachable image. If your picture would suit a wanted poster it won't encourage anyone to pick up the phone, unless they're looking to be claiming the reward...

#### What to say

Modesty and self-effacement go out of the window here; the About Me section is selling you. Like a job application,

you don't want to be arrogant, but don't shy away from celebrating your successes. Inject a little of your personality, and if you enjoy a joke, use humour, but lay off the cheese. Writing genuinely witty and engaging copy is an art form - and can go horribly wrong, so beware.

Don't make it too long - remember attention spans are short - but put across a few key points that tell clients who you are. Talk about your experience, include some background, your likes and dislikes, your favourite books and films, and even your family if you feel comfortable with that. Look at other photographers' About Me pages for inspiration, but not for a template to copy. Be aware of cultural differences too: what works for an American audience might not work for UK clients.

You could also include testimonials from existing clients to give visitors more idea of who you are and how you approach your work. They can say things about you that you could never say yourself without sounding arrogant.

It doesn't just have to be words and pictures of course. About Me videos are increasingly popular. As bandwidths have improved, video quality has too and a well-crafted film can say so much more about you in three minutes than 300 words can. If you're not an accomplished filmmaker though, don't go there, call in an expert.

Prospective clients want to know about you. If you don't offer them a professional presentation of yourself, you'll miss out. Here eight professional photographers, who haven't missed out, share their experiences of creating their own About me pages, pictures and videos. →

**IMAGE** Follow the example of Indonesian photographer Devina Paramita and welcome your audience with a smile: an approachable picture on your About Me page could lead to more bookings.



## ABOUT ME

### CAT HEPPLER

Wedding photographer Cat Hepple hosts an About Me film on her site that goes behind the scenes on a shoot.

"Of course I want to showcase beautiful and emotive imagery," she says, "but I also know that, to create that imagery, I need a relationship with my couples, and that comes from them actually liking me and, most importantly, trusting me. My About Me page is designed to connect with prospective clients, to tell them more about the person they'd be working with and, hopefully, put them at their ease."

"My video was created by Emma Wilson from Story of your Day films;

www.storyofyourday.co.uk. I knew she would be the perfect person to capture the essence of me. The video shows me as I am on a wedding day, the chat I have with couples, the way I work and, importantly, how relaxed they are. It allows a couple to explore what it might be like to work with me, and hopefully reassures them that I'm easy to work with and fun too. A video does that in a way an image just can't.

"It's interesting how many of my couples say how much the video gave them confidence about booking me, and how they felt they liked me. And, for me, that relationship is crucial."

#### MORE INFORMATION

[www.cathepplephotography.com](http://www.cathepplephotography.com)

### ADAM BRONKHORST

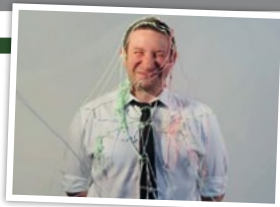
Wedding photographer Adam Bronkhorst is another to go down the video route, and his jokey production features him getting smothered in crazy foam and party poppers.

"When I thought about what to put on my About Me page I was reminded of the quote that 'people buy people,'" he says. "I thought I would have the video because since I would be spending the whole day with a couple I felt that it was really important for them to get a better sense of me, rather than just a photo with background info. It's surprising how much more you can get from a short video clip."

"I thought long and hard about what I wanted to show, and every idea that I came up with was based around something quite fun and quirky as that's my style of photography. There's no point having quirky and creative images if you come across as very dull in a video, so I wanted something that would emphasise that and just reinforce the fact that my images are fun and I'm fun to hang around with or to have around on a wedding day."

#### MORE INFORMATION

[www.vivaweddingphotography.com](http://www.vivaweddingphotography.com)



### LIZ BRADLEY

Social photographer Liz Bradley (the Jane in the business name is her sister) tackles everything from weddings through to portraits and pets. Her lively, informal About Me page is actually a series of pages that show Liz in various situations where she explains everything from her love of dogs through to how many pairs of shoes she owns (40).

"The first thing I do on a photographer's website is to click on the About section because I want to see who they are," she says. "I was also tired of so many websites where the about section either has a portfolio photo or an image of the photographer hugging their camera. It says nothing about who that person is. I really want my clients to connect with me and my About page is where that starts."

"Some people will come to my About page and decide they don't like me, and that's good! Because the people who don't like me probably won't be a good fit to work with me anyway, but the people who connect with me in some way, well, it makes working together more of a pleasure."

"When I set about creating these pages I knew that I didn't want a lot of text, and I definitely did not want to list off my credentials to prove I can take photos well. I wanted to connect on a more personal level, so I started with a list of things that I love and went from there."



#### MORE INFORMATION

[www.elizabethandjane.ca](http://www.elizabethandjane.ca)

### MEGAN JOHNS

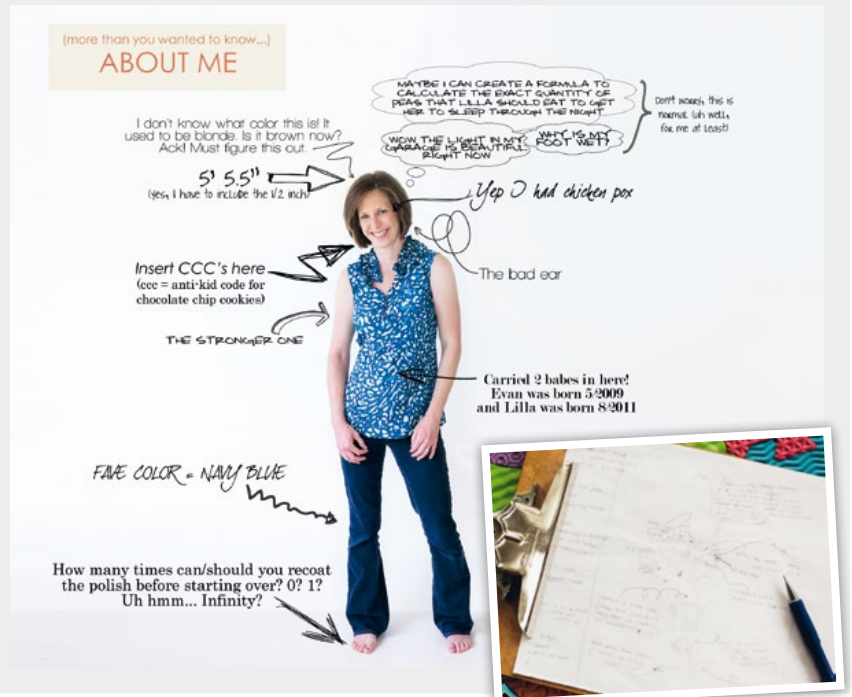
Based in Jacksonville, Florida, Megan Johns' About Me page is a shining example of how to make a section such as this approachable and easy to access, and it's packed full of personal information.

"I didn't want to write the regular old 'my kids are my world and they inspire me to be a photographer... blah, blah, blah,'" says the child and family lifestyle photographer. "Of course they are my world, and they do inspire me, but I designed my About Me page to show my clients (who are a lot like me) that I'm neither faceless nor perfect, and I also wanted them to know that when they come to their session they will see my funny and silly side. And that is the part of my personality I wanted to highlight."

"This page is really, really important to me," she explains, "and I love how it turned out overall. I feel this page can give my clients some true insight into my life and personality. I would never want anyone to book with me if they didn't feel they could relate to me."

#### MORE INFORMATION

[www.meganjohnsphotography.com](http://www.meganjohnsphotography.com)



## DADE FREEMAN

Brighton-based Dade Freeman has a striking self-portrait on his About Me page, which does an expert job of showing who he is, what his sense of humour is like and the kind of work he shoots.

"The idea came from me wanting to create something interesting and attention grabbing," he says. "Having lots of different ideas and images to show off I couldn't decide what to do. At first I thought about having them spill out of my head, but then after a while the idea of blowing them out of my brain seemed a better fit."

**MORE INFORMATION**

[www.dadefreeman.com](http://www.dadefreeman.com)



## NICK HALL

Originally from the UK, but now living on 'an island near Seattle', Nick Hall starts off with his vital statistics and then continues with a list of his top ten loves on his About Me page (everything from a well-made sausage through to the creativity of friends and colleagues, since you ask). It's all accompanied by a friendly image shot with an iPhone 4.

"I arrived at this concept from multiple directions," he says. "My website designer came up with the idea, and this got me thinking about the essential ingredients that define me and my personality. I was also looking to create something that reflected my fun-loving personality while at the same time still felt professional and meaningful. And finally I absolutely wanted a format that could distil my brand and I in quick, easy to read nuggets of info."

**MORE INFORMATION**

[www.nickhallphotography.com](http://www.nickhallphotography.com)



## DEVINA PARAMITA

Indonesian-based photographer Devina Paramita (pictured on our opening spread) uses a friendly, approachable picture of herself on her About Me page, alongside personal details about how she first moved into the business.

"I want my future clients to know who the person behind the camera is," she says. "I want to introduce a little bit of me in my own way and since I'm also a blogger I thought storytelling would fit me best. It took me around two days to finish the page. It's hard to decide which information to use while keeping it fun yet relevant to the purpose of the site."

**MORE INFORMATION**

[www.fotografina.com](http://www.fotografina.com)

## MATT KENNEDY

Based in Vancouver, BC, Matt runs his wedding photography business with his wife Carissa, and he specialises in this area because he 'values marriage'.

"We wanted to make our Meet Us page original," he says, "and we love the idea of talking about each other rather than talking about ourselves. So we went the route of writing similarly structured write-ups about each other from our own perspective, so our clients could get to know us and get to know how we think of each other. We also included our promo video and another feature video that gets more behind the scenes of our



lives, because we think people enjoy connecting with us on an emotional level as well. As wedding photographers we are dealing with people who are coming up to the biggest step in their relationship, and they want to know that we can relate to them, and that it's still fun after being married for ten years!"

**MORE INFORMATION**

[www.mattkennedy.ca](http://www.mattkennedy.ca)