



Smartphone Photography Membership Case Study with Mike James



Taking pictures used to be a drag for Mike James. Now he derives both pleasure and income teaching people to take good pictures with their phones.



Mike James

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is episode 877. It's got a nice rhyme to it. Got my special guest, friend here, Mike James. Welcome, Mike

Mike: Good day, James.

James: So you have this photography website that came to my attention through our [10XPRO](#) community. And what I wanted to do today is to share your story, because you're a pretty humble fellow from what I can tell. A little bit of background, you are a technical photographer, so you've got an in-depth knowledge of really high-end photography, you've got a world of experience in that.

And then now, what you've done is you've created this environment where people can learn about how to create their own photos using the device they already own. And you've really become a convert, I think, to the mobile side of things. So you call yourself a mobile purist. I like that, it's very clear on what that means.

Every single person listening to this show, or watching the video on YouTube, or wherever we put it, has a portable device. So I think it's relevant. And I'd say most people listening take pictures with their phone. So that's one aspect of it. That's really interesting. I'd love to get a couple of tips on that while I'm here, because it'd be a waste not to.

But also, I want to talk about your own little journey of starting out. You know, you're like so many people I talk to. They're like, I do this thing that I love, or that I'm qualified in at work, and I want to see if I can make it a bit of a side hobby, a little bit of a gig that I can actually get to - you know, even if it paid for itself for some people, that will be good. And if it makes a profit, that will be incredible. And for some people, they want to go all in and turn that into a quit-your-job experience, which is [what I did](#).

So wherever you're at on that scale, if you're listening to this episode, and you've got a hobby or an interest, or some sort of expertise, and you think you'd like to think about making that into an income generator, then Mike James's story is going to be interesting for you. So you actually started off doing in-person photography workshops for photo enthusiasts, half a decade ago. Tell me about that.

From hard work to passion

Mike: Yeah, so my background is very technical photography, as you say. So using big cameras, the latest cameras. And about six years ago, I had a realization that even though I had the best equipment out there, I didn't take photos. And I didn't have a passion for photography. To be honest, I actually hated photography.

James: Because it was work, it meant work for you?

Mike: That's exactly right. That's exactly right. And because, every time I took a photo, I had to use my big gear, get into all the manual controls. I was one of those annoying people at the family events. Just like, just wait, wait, I've got to get this right. Go stand over there. But then, six years ago, my mom passed away. And when she passed away, I had the unfortunate discovery of when you go through that process, you go looking for photos, video, anything you can.

And I was absolutely shocked that at the time, my eldest, I've got three kids, my eldest was nine. And I only had six photos of my mom over that whole nine years. And that's because, when I'm bringing out the camera, I felt like I was working. So I didn't do it. I didn't make the effort. And so that was kind of a turning point where it's like, Okay, I've got to get into photography. And so I started lugging around my big gear, and I was falling into that trap again, because it was just so hard.

James: I've done that. Sorry to interrupt, but I've carted a DSLR camera with a big lens around on overseas trips. That can really interfere with your enjoyment of the moment. And also, as a parent with young kids, I spent a little bit too much time looking at my kids playing soccer or whatever through the lens, or the side camera on a little video cam, instead of just watching them. And I've learned from that.

I have an enormous amount of footage of my daughter now. There's so many pictures. What you can do on the portrait mode of an iPhone, modern iPhone, is off the charts. I've had people ask, What did you use for that picture? But I just wanted to say, I get your point. And the sort of backdrop to what you're talking about here is very closely associated with the topic of, can you align your work with your enjoyment and get paid for it? And sometimes you can't.

And you had to let go of that notion of having the pro technology or the big gear to actually achieve the desired result you wanted, and they were probably not going to be mutual. You know, I smiled when you said that you were the annoying photographer. Every time I go to events, in some places, they're always like, just one more, just one more, you know, wait, it's just like, come on, just get it over with. You know, like, it is interruption or an impost in the actual being in the moment that we hear so much about.

So I thought that was interesting. But there's also another side thing, and that is, some people suffer this disease called perfectionism. And they need everything to be just right. The aperture, and the focus, and the lens has to be clean, and the right luminosity, I don't even know the terms. I'm just making them up.

You can put so much focus on that stuff and then miss the whole point, you basically win the battle, but you lose the war. And as a sort of generalist who deals in broad brushstrokes most of the time, I'm totally fine with the point and shoot. I'm even recording this episode, actually, on just an iMac, because I've got the fantastic camera sitting just above it, and I haven't wired it up yet.

But I'm just rolling with it, because I want to get this moment rather than wait till it's perfect, but actually maybe miss out on it. So to that point, that must have been a mental hurdle to clear. But once you went past it, it really looks like you ran with the baton.

Where it's all about the intent

Mike: Yeah. I think when I suspended my extreme prejudice towards the smartphone and had a go at it, it was so freeing, as you say, to let go of all that technical stuff and just focus on photo intention, composition, and all these things were brand new to me, and I really struggled with it. And it doesn't matter what device you have, whether it's an iPhone, Android, tablet, iPad, whatever it is, as long as you do those things, go, okay, what's motivating me to take this photo?



And it's the same as writing content, a piece of content for your blog, or YouTube, whatever it is, you have to have an intention, why am I doing this? And for me, when I'm creating this content, it's got to be closely aligned with the transformation for my photo enthusiast, or if I'm working with a remote team delivering a presentation, what am I going to deliver? And it has to be fun for me. And as a side business, everything I do has to, otherwise, it's going to be a struggle. It's going to be a hard slog.

James: Yeah, like, you've got an allocation of energy to that activity, you know, a resource allocation. And I'm big on that, obviously, [Work Less, Make More](#). You could easily score your [effective hourly rate](#) versus what you're doing as a profession. That's what I did, actually, that was literally the benchmark.

My simple metric was when my effective hourly rate for my own business can match or exceed my effective hourly rate from my regular business. And that I get enough hours that I can actually equal my income, I'm out of there. And I managed to reach my effective hourly rate very early, but I didn't get the actual total outcome.

Once I got the total revenue is the same, I was out of there. But as soon as I didn't have all those hours that I was selling too cheap to my employer, I was able to scale dramatically, I was able to make each month what I used to make in a couple of months, in three or four months. So it was like, it just snowballed.

So, I think you just gave us some photography tips, by the way, because you talked about photographic intention. You know, like, why you're taking the picture. I'd love you to tell me what that means.

Mike: Yeah so, it's the stimulus. It's why you're taking the photo. And it's the biggest difference between just a snapshot and a strategically set-up, purposeful photo, because if you just pull out the phone, just take a snapshot, you always take the photo at eye level, which is boring. We all live experiencing life at eye level.

But if you think, okay, the reason why I'm taking this photo is because I want to show off this bike that we're selling on our store, or I want to just capture this moment of riding through a beautiful bright and this autumn weather, when you start thinking about the intention, you go, okay, I'm going to shoot this from a lower angle, because when I shoot it from a lower angle, instantly it's more interesting.

I'm communicating a bit of a story, and storytelling in photos was a foreign idea to me, I had no idea. I'm shooting a landscape, where's the story here? Like, I didn't understand. But it's like, it's the visual literacy behind the photo, it's attracting people's attention when they look at the photo. So where's that point of fixation? And then having a bit of a journey.



And this is where the storytelling comes into it, because you have all those background elements in the frame. So that bike, and then you've got the beautiful autumn trees behind it. So you get down on a lower angle. When you have that intention, or even if it's for your Instagram account, you have a call to action, you instantly improve your photos intuitively without understanding composition, rule of thirds, and all that technical stuff.

Another example is if you have a special in your cafe, and you've got a new hamburger, getting down on a lower angle and shooting table top height into the hamburger, you could see inside the hamburger, instead of, like we all see those...

James: You just see the bun. Or in my case, probably the lettuce, because I don't eat the wheat. I love it. I'm learning, I'm learning a lot here. So intention, different angles. You talked about the rule of thirds, I did already know that one. For anyone listening, I like taking interesting pictures for [my Instagram account, James Schramko](#).

This is one of the decisions I made, actually, I rather tell a story of my life on that, and I break the rules. I know social media is all about pandering to the audience. And it should be social youdia, right? But I'm not doing it that way on James Schramko. I'm telling my story, because people get to know me. So I'm sharing.

And if they're interested, great. If they're not, that's fine, but I'm documenting with a photographic pictorial. I know that stuff's going to be on the internet forever, even if I delete it, probably, because all the social media companies are evil, of course.

But I know that people resonate. Like, the other day, I posted a picture of a love heart on a coffee that I made myself, I generated it. And I got a lot of feedback from that from people who have known my struggle of bad attempts at it in the past. And I finally got to the peak of the mountain with the love heart, which is, like, apparently, like literally the easiest thing to make for coffee art. But they celebrated with me, and I felt lifted by that.

And I think with that concept of intent, you've literally destroyed all those TikTok dancing videos. The only intent I can think of is that they're wanting a lot of likes and self-acceptance and appreciation and significance because - it's really weird, I still don't understand that one.

Pros and cons of in-person workshops

So just back to your journey, you've thought, Okay, I'm shedding my ideas about what's involved to take pictures. I'm going to teach people this. And you started out with workshops, and you did it the sort of minimum viable product way. In-person is a high-conversion medium. You learn a lot, you can get a good amount of leverage to start with, but it's also geographically sort of difficult.

It's almost impossible at the moment, or it was last year in most places. And there's costs involved and organizing and stress. I ran events every single year and it is a massive pain in the ass, for most people, you know, unless they're pedantic about organization. So you thought, Okay, I'm going to take this online, and you set up a website.

Mike: Yeah, and you're absolutely right about running those in-person workshops. You learn so much, even on a small scale, when you have half a dozen people turn up.

James: I highly recommend them. Yeah.

Mike: Yeah. I had all these assumptions that people wanted to learn the technical side of using the iPhone, and then people turn up and go, Oh, I've got an Android. Oh, okay. I'm not prepared for that.

James: Did you manage out of it okay?

Mike: Yeah, yeah.

James: I tell that story of like, when I started my business 2006, I got contracted to deliver a sales presentation. I invoiced the customer \$4,000, and I bought a laptop for \$4,000, a Fujitsu, that was the start of my online journey. And I built this beautiful sales presentation on the PowerPoint, and I showed up to the training, and the cupboard with the projector was locked, and the guy didn't come in that day. So I basically couldn't use it. But it did gift me an online business in the end. So I managed to turn that lemon into lemonade.

But all events are a logistical challenge. I hate them leading into them, and I love them when I've just finished the last session, there's a big higher euphoria of, We did it! And the people are transformed. And I used to actually, back in the day, you might remember these things, there used to be flip cams, you know, that little camera you hold, and it has a USB stick?

I used to give those out in the event, and we used to make videos to learn how to do a video like this. Hi, I'm James, and welcome to my free report on how to use your phone to take pictures. And everyone would role-play and do it. And then we'd do a competition and see whose was the best, and we'd give out prizes to keep the flip phone. But that interactivity, it's hard to get that over the computer.

The initial nightmare of having a website

Mike: Now, that's true. And for the exact reasons that you mentioned that I couldn't reach people anymore, I was stuck to a geographical location. So that was kind of the decision then to get online. And so I did like most people, I need a website.

James: That's like, okay, massive nightmare, website, it's huge, isn't it, when you're trying to go online? How did you deal with that?

Mike: Yeah so, a friend of a friend, club-type thing. And because it was totally foreign to me, totally new, it was like, okay, I need a website, I need help with this, because I got to the point where that paralysis by analysis, trying to work it all out, and getting all this information from everywhere. And so I eventually went to somebody who put it together for me.

They had a wonderful brief, we worked it out. But the business has changed. Now, I have courses and I have webinars and all this sort of thing. So it just absolutely became bloated. And all these plugins to make all these things talk to each other. It just, as you said, I have limited bandwidth. Because I do actually enjoy my full-time job, I have no intention of leaving that. I love the business on the side, it brings me a lot of fulfillment. I'm helping a lot of people. I don't want to be bogged down with this website.

James: You don't want it to be a burden, right?

Mike: Yeah. And it absolutely was, it absolutely was, because as you've talked about in previous episodes with guests with a similar story, things break, like you're chasing things...

James: Did you have to pay a lot of money?

Mike: I did. And when I'm running those in-person workshops at the time for like, six people at a time, I didn't have a lot of cash flow. So it all went into the website, hiring this developer. And similar to your story, I got to the end of it, it's like, yeah, I've got the website. Fantastic. Where is everyone?

James: Oh, yeah, still, that's very common.

Mike: Yeah.

James: And so you spend out the money, and you got, I suppose, initially too, you would have been, potentially for some people, it can be a fun distraction. Because it represents the excitement of what's going to come. You think, Okay, this is my bridge to the paradise beyond it. I'm going to be an Internet success with this business. So you're excited about the outcome, but it just doesn't seem to materialize so easily.

What started with a Facebook group

Mike: Yeah, that's right. And I had that hustler mentality, it's like, I'm working hard. I'm working hard on building this and working. But it was a distraction from what my customers really wanted, which was content, free content, paid content, but I was just too busy doing all that sort of thing. So I was out there, I had a Facebook group, and that became really popular, and then, late last year, Facebook turned off the notifications from all notifications to highlight, so my organic traffic just plummeted.

And I went and lived overseas for seven months, and the business kind of slowed down. But I kept the community going, the Facebook group, I absolutely loved it, photo themes in there, that sort of thing. And that helped me understand and connect with the business. I go, Okay, that is the part of the business that I love, is the community side of it, and talking to my customers after they've purchased the course, and continue with their transformation and their journey.

And then when that happened with Facebook, it's like, Oh, no. And so I did that [OwnTheRacecourse](#) thing that you do.

James: I do. You know, the amount of times I hear this, and it's just so common, please, if you're listening to this podcast or watching it, and you have anything on a social platform, especially the big ones, like Facebook, right now, they seem so unpopular. I even heard somewhere that they were looking to change their name. I don't know if that will pan out, but you just have to count on them pulling the rug from you, you have to expect that. It's going to happen.



And like, you're in a benign industry. Taking pictures, that's not the type of industry that usually gets slapped for example, but you got decked by the algorithm itself. So the way that it functions is beyond your control. One of the great things when you have control of your assets is you can decide how you want the game to be played. So you had your Facebook group, you had Instagram. I think at some point you had a course on Teachable.

Mike: Yes. Yeah, that was my learning management system.

James: And because that was probably easy just to load it up there.

Mike: Yeah, super easy. Super easy. Yep. You pay for it, but it's not white label, there's still Teachable things everywhere. People need to log into the Teachable app, I still didn't own it. And I wanted to, I wanted to have total control over it. But I had Teachable over here. I had my email, I just had so many things everywhere.

Where has this platform been all this time?

And with that happening with the community, I went out there. Okay, what is the ideal product that will do everything for me? I know, it's probably going to be well out of my budget, but I just want to see what's out there. And I was looking at a long list and narrowed it down. And then at the last minute, I came across [10XPRO](#), and it's like, where has this been? Like, I should have been on this years ago.

James: How did you find out about it? I'm just curious.

Mike: Through yourself, through this podcast.

James: Oh, okay, well.

Mike: Yeah.

James: That's even better. I mean, I didn't know the answer to that, just in case anyone's wondering if I set that up, I totally didn't. But I'm pleased about that, because it sounds like it made a difference. And especially now, I do think there's a shift with the social media, it's all gone a bit turbulent.

And I do think people being at home more and probably intending to be at home more from what I can tell, from the cattle crush to get out to regional areas and to move and stuff, which I've even done myself. There's a permanent shift happening. I think the hobby course type market is explosive. I know certainly my music customers have had two, three, five times growth in the last 12 months, it's just been stratospheric, because people have more time at home, and they don't intend to go back to work.

Eighty percent of people don't want to go back to their office job. Now, I know you love your work. And that's cool, because you're not in an office most of the time anyway, probably. I think this is the time to get the right platform to take you where you went.

So what was your process? When you realized it wasn't getting you the result you thought you should be able to get, that other people were getting, you sat down and created a checklist.

Mike: Yeah, so community was one, being able to integrate with my email system, [ActiveCampaign](#). And that's one of the things I love about 10XPRO, is that you can tag just about anything. Like, previously, the whole cart abandonment, or someone visits a site, and then they go to here, it was really complicated. And you could just put a tag on there. And actions.

So I've now got into segmentation with my list, which before would have just been not all too hard. But the process is just so simple. And just touching on that community again, yes, it's nice and simple with Facebook. And if you're out there listening, you go, okay, but it's so simple, this is where they are. That's where they are. But you get a lot of keyboard warriors there, you get a lot of people who are just there because they're just scrolling and interacting, but they're not real quality customers.

James: Oh, here's the key word again, intent.

Mike: Yeah, that's right.

James: People are on Facebook. Everyone's on Facebook, right? We're all on Facebook. But what is their intent when they're on there? And from what I hear, like I don't have a Facebook group other than my Maldives experience, which is, it's the only easy way that I have to just share the logistics and to let everyone just load all their pictures in, and there's like 12 people in there.

And it's easy, because they're from all around the world, and I'm not going to go and set up a membership from our Maldives experience. So that's fine. But I don't have the other groups. But from what I can hear with anyone's volume or whatever, they have to constantly moderate from people coming in trying to spam their latest Crypto bulls*it or Forex trading or whatever.

They have catfights, people being hostile or bad attitudes, occasionally, like, debating things. I see this in, like, my surfing groups that I'm in. You should see the wars there are over whether you should put a tail pad on your fish or not. I never realized this, but there's this hardcore, like you should never, ever put a tail pad on a fish. So it's a, Man you'd always go for performance. Don't worry about aesthetics. Like I've seen flare ups on that, so something as simple as that can create a war. Someone has to manage that.

And one thing that comes up a lot when we're talking about forums, people go, Well, I'm worried my engagement isn't as high, because they're probably basing it off a Facebook level of engagement. But my question is always, what kind of engagement matters? And if someone engages in a success thread, or a challenge thread, or a journal thread, once a day, that's worth 100 likes on some post about your favorite aperture or whatever, right?

Weaning your people off of Facebook

It's a significantly different type of engagement. So that's fascinating. And the other thing people sometimes say, it's very hard to come off Facebook and put them somewhere else. Did you experience that?

Mike: Absolutely. Absolutely.

James: Fighting and screaming?

Mike: Yeah. And the reality is, I did lose a lot of people. And I've felt like I have had to start again. Initially, that was a bit of a downer. But now, I love the process, because the people that are in there have to log into their account. So they have that intention. And when they join, it's got rid of those people that are just passively watching.

So people that are in there, they want to be there. And when I release a new product, and I talk about it on there, they're interested, they are my ideal clients. And to be able to segment all the passive observers...

James: You've scraped the cream off the bottle of milk.

Mike: Yeah.

James: Two questions on that. Do you use the push notifications when you upgrade something?

Mike: No, I only just discovered that.

James: It's so good, the booster. Because that's just basically like a spider web message. It's saying, Hey, I've just loaded this brand new training, and they all come running. The other thing that I would highly recommend anyone listening to this is, use the app. It's a small extra upgrade, but it puts it on their iPhone on that home screen, right where their Facebook logo login would be.

And so it gets them much closer to the membership, and that reduces all friction for login. They just click on the app, it's already logged in, and they can scroll around your membership. So that's a useful addition. I use that on [SuperFastResults](#). I use it as the owner, but I know my customers use it as customers as well. So it's really handy.

Mike: Yeah, and that's the thing, I'm only using a fraction of what's inside 10XPRO.

James: But you're using the right things. As you said, hand in glove for ActiveCampaign. You can take the money, cart, you've got your pages all there to help people find the membership, and buy the membership, and join the membership, or get your courses sold. And you can let them know when there's something new, and you've got a forum in there.

Mike: Yup. And you can personalize everything. And the amazing templates that are there to start and that sort of thing. But with my WordPress that I'm so glad to see the end of that, I used to use WooCommerce, because again, I'm just trying to use all these plugins. And to get control over the thank you page and all this sort of thing, you'd have to pay for this extra, this extra, this.

And within 10XPRO, the thank you page, the checkout, all that is just like a normal page. And it's the same navigation moving around, just adding blocks to every other thing. So the learning curve is not as steep as I thought it would be. I have to be honest, I was a bit apprehensive about joining 10XPRO, setting it all up, because I had 300 pages.

The support that is something else

James: Well, you've got to commit to a new platform. You've got that risk. Did you get supported through your migration?

Mike: Oh my gosh, the support was like nothing I've ever experienced. On the chat when you're in there, and you've got your page open, and you're doing that, there's the little chat, live chat. And I had answers there straightaway. Like I was paying a lot of money in the early days for a developer to do a project. Here's the end result.

But that support, while I was building it, migrating it, and even yesterday, I was on there again with the chat, bang, straightaway, I had someone there, and they gave me the solution. I mean, [John](#)'s done a great job with all the resources, the university or the academy, and all that sort of thing. But to have someone there that can answer your specific question right there and then, the most I've had to wait is a few hours for them to get back to me.

James: You know, it's one of the main reasons that I've partnered with John. John's the founder of 10XPRO. It's because him and I share the same values around what level of support should be available for people investing in your product. And he's got a team of developers. He's got a team of support assistants, and they're all over it. Anytime I've asked for something or queried something, it's fixed within 15 minutes, or by the next day, if it's a feature. So quick.

I've never experienced that either. And when you experience that, you realize, okay, that's automatically the difference. I often say, there are lots of private platforms out there. We hear a lot of the common names. And they do what they do. And for the most part, I think they're catering for people starting out.

They want defeatured, simple, get going sort of stuff, almost like a private teachable, but at reasonably low cost. But they're not as well-supported. And then you get to a point where you now can't do the thing you need to do. And that's why 10XPRO is different. 10XPRO is more a Mercedes-Benz level private platform. And there are lots of Kia and Hyundai sort of style ones out there. But they only get you down the path so far. So that little bit of customization is good.

And I noticed yesterday, I logged in, and there was this new feature on the social wall that I'm using. It now had a little admin badge on my name. It was cool, and everything I asked for, the ability to just select a little part and reply to just that, and it populates a new comment. It's like, I'm getting deep into it.

And you watch, in 2022, I'm building a new installation from scratch. And I'm going to use new features, John and I are working on brand new features where you can have collaboration. So I don't want to get the cat out of the bag too much. But you can pull in several of your members and create little pods around that. That's going to be a feature I've asked for.

And I also want playbooks. I want to be able to have little frameworks and stuff. So that will be handy to someone like you. It will be some kind of a feature where you can just load in the steps for something. So someone wants to take a photo from scratch, they just follow the steps and tick them off. So that's pretty cool.

Everything you want in one place

So you basically went through the valley of death, and you made it to the other side, you ended up with your new site. And it looks good, and it's working. Then what did you do with all your other assets? So you had your WordPress site, you had your Facebook page or group, you had your Teachable course, you had a lot of bits and pieces, like most people end up with stuff everywhere. Did you bring it all together?

Mike: Yeah, 10XPRO is the only asset I have now.

James: It's your central hub, the universe, it's everything.

Mike: Yeah, and some of them still post in the Facebook group. And straightaway, I'm straight in there saying, Hey, come over to the members' site, it's free. This is the photo theme, this is the link, and I will send them straight there. And it just works.

James: You know, that is literally the strategy that most high-ticket coaches teach, is to set up a pop-up Facebook group or open a Facebook group for free and gather people, like siphon them off the platform and then sell them a high-ticket program from there into the actual thing. But your actual thing is, it sounds amazing.

A fun thing that actually pays

So what's it look like now on a sort of a regular scheduled basis? Because this is your fun thing to do that pays for yourself. I mean, just to give perspective for our listener, you're making quite good income from this as a side gig, you know, this pays for family holidays, or some living costs, or whatever. Like, it's a decent earner for a hobby.

I know lots of people probably have hobbies, like hang gliding, or Top Fuel dragging, or jet skiing, that don't pay them a cent. At least your hobby is a cashflow-positive thing. Are you still expanding or going deeper with it or enjoying it even more? Or are you on a plateau?

Mike: No, absolutely. I'm going live in YouTube every day. So I'm trying to build that branding on that side of it. I'm in the forum every day, sharing tips every day. And when you deliver training, it helps you learn as well, like I'm learning as I do that, and I break it all down and share it. So I'm creating content every day. The blog, I'm doing a blog once a week. And this is one of the things I love. It's just so easy. There's a blog template, go in there.

James: I asked for that. I said, John, I want a blog. He goes, what do you need a blog for? Because it's like, you just want the sales page and the end thing you deliver. That's the shortest possible path. And blogging can be a massive distraction. But there are creatives and people like me with a podcast where a blog feature makes it, if you have a podcast, you want to do a blog post per episode and get that SEO happening. So yeah, that's great. So you're blogging regularly and building the asset.

Mike: Yeah, and it's the blogs that's the SEO that is bringing in those remote learning or remote teams. So with everybody going online and having their teams all over the world, I know it's been around for a long time, but now on a larger scale, some really big corporates are now doing that. Then, because I was blogging, had that SEO and talking about this sort of thing, that has brought in a lot of clients.

Yes, they're not photo enthusiasts, but it's good for the cash flow, it really helps. And it's because of that blog and those efforts getting out there and doing that. And developing courses, I love, because I went and spent two years studying training design and assessment, just to make myself stand out from other photographers delivering training. And so I love creating, training and creating courses.

Where do you get more engagement?

And one of the reasons I moved across from Teachable over to 10XPRO is that Teachable, it's great for video lessons, and it's steady, but it's really, really hard to get engagement and help people complete the course and get that transformation. And when I looked at the completion stats, I was just devastated. Because all the work you put into creating this course, and then for them to just sit there and then not engage.

But with 10XPRO, you've got gamification, you've got tags that you can get in there, I know this is one that you've requested, you could keep an eye on them and see how they're going.

James: You know, because I was selling some B2B installation, last year, I made a B2B site. And when you sell the bulk licenses, let's say they have a team of 30 people, I want to be able to know, or the manager wants to know, where are my 30 people up to in the training? And I wanted to be able to have a dashboard. And John said, Okay, if you want that. And so we did it.

And now you can see in a snapshot, is anyone actually getting through this? Because I'm the marketer who's like, I don't want to just get paid for my stuff, I want to create the transformation. I want my customer to get a result. Because having a great product never hurt anyone, right? If they actually get results, they're going to be raving fans, they're going to buy other things, they'll make referrals.

And now, you, the product creator, can hold yourself accountable to the outcomes of your students. Does that chart line up with all the claims on your sales page? Because if it does, you have an unbelievable business, and you're doing good stuff.

If you want more of Mike...

And you know, something that comes clearly through to me, Mike, I speak to a lot of people, you're a good person, and that comes through. Like, your intent for your audience is for them to have those pictures of their mom, and to be able to make them amazing.

So I'd love it if you could share with us where we can go and get into your community, join your programs, buy your courses.

Mike: Yeah, fantastic. So the website is smartphonephotography.club. That has a landing page there where, it's one of the things I love about it, it also has an exit pop-up, all this sort of cool stuff, tech stuff that is easy to set up. So go into there, and on that page, it explains that this is what you get in the membership, you get all the links to my podcast, YouTube, it's all there. All my freebies, my free course, PDFs, it's like a central repository for everything stored in the one location.

So it's a free membership. Go in there. And you can access all that, the forum, and then from a business side of it, down there, when you log in, it then has the recommended courses down the bottom, the paid courses as well. So it's kind of subtle selling that I love that you don't have to be in their face all the time. So that's the site, is smartphonephotography.club, and get access to everything in the one spot.

James: Perfect, smartphonephotography.club. Mike, just to finish out, thank you so much for sharing that. I think what you've talked about is a journey that most people are familiar with, at least one or two parts of that - confusing, difficult tech, stuff everywhere, not quite happy with the results, got it all fixed, one place, 10XPRO.io, solved a problem.

One thing that will improve your pictures

Now I've got an iPhone. I've got one here in my pocket. It's like, my current phone. What could I implement today to take a better picture than I was able to do this morning before I spoke to you?

Mike: Intention.

James: That's it. That's definitely it for me. It's so rewarding doing a podcast, because I learn from every guest. You've taught me about intention. And you're right, sometimes I take quite a few pictures and then I end up deleting them because they're rubbish. Like I've got to get clear on what shot I want. My wife's way better at this. She has definitely got intention, she knows the shot she's looking for.

And the second thing is trying different angles. I mean, I take lots of pictures of surfboards, which I'm sure is extremely boring for most of my audience. But for my surfing friends, it's considered art. But I'm always looking for the right angle, as a surfer, to make that board really pop. I often lay them down on some unpolished cement, or next to a big arrow, or lying on the grass next to the beach. I'm always trying to get that shot that a photographer would be doing if they knew what they were doing.

So yeah, I'm going to try some different angles. That's two things. I'm going to do intention and angles, and I'm going to learn more from your site. So thank you so much for coming and sharing, and I really appreciate what you're doing for everyone who has a smartphone and wants to take better pictures.

Mike: Fantastic.



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