

# 5 Tips to **MAXIMIZE** Your Mini Sessions

BY

*the Blumes*





# Tip #1

## LIMIT AVAILABILITY

When it comes to mini sessions, “scarcity” is the name of the game. So as the head of your own marketing department, create scarcity! If you do, you can bet that the law of supply and demand will kick in just as reliably as gravity.

First, limit your public Mini Session event to just one weekend — once or twice per year. Then plan to shoot only the number of sessions you can perform well.. before you become light-headed and your legs give out under you. Sure, I could squeeze in 10 Minis per day if I wanted. But I’ve found that six sessions per day keeps me on top of my game. I reveal a full schedule of openings on our blog for potential clients to see, but I mark several openings as “taken” right away to give myself time to rest or snack at intervals. Those visibly “taken” spots immediately emphasize the scarcity and help generate our first bookings. Just as you’d be skeptical about eating in an empty restaurant on Friday night, consumers never want to be the first to book. People feel better following a crowd.

When your Mini Sessions are limited, you don’t have to worry about “undercutting” your full-length or specialty sessions throughout the year. As you’ll see, that fear is truly unfounded for other reasons as well. But there’s physically no way for every future client to be a part of your Minis anyway.





# Tip #2

## STAND OUT through SERVICE



One of the profound truths of marketing is that people don't buy what you do; they buy *why* you do it. Believe it or not, consumers — in particular the financially secure clients you as a luxury service want to attract — are looking for an experience, not a bargain.

Every other photographer out there is shouting, "Hire me! I'll charge you less for photographs." Sadly, bargain hunters don't stop hunting until they find the single best bargain, which accounts for the shockingly high percentage of would-be photographers who go out of business every year.

You, on the other hand, should remain cool and confident in pricing yourself higher and sustain your business long-term. That is, if you offer more than photographs. A full-service experience isn't hard to create. It consists in simple things: professionally written emails, clearly set expectations, and human kindnesses like the cold bottled waters and clean towels we provide to our families during their session.

Always guide clients through an ordering process — whether in-person or online. Even though they're paying for it, did you realize this is part of the experience clients desire? We always offer and deliver prints and other artwork that clients select after their sessions.

The truth is that although your ideal client values photography, she doesn't have time to research and plan the best ways to preserve your digital files. This is exactly why most "shoot and share" handovers of digital files result in nothing to show for it. It's a disservice to clients who actually want an expert (ahem.. this should be you, by the way!) to guide them in their purchase. So how do you qualify potential clients and make sure the full-service experience you offer is what they're looking for?



# Tip #3

## QUALIFY POTENTIAL CLIENTS

Do you realize that you actually should not try to book every inquiry you receive? If you have a 100-percent booking rate, you probably aren't earning any profit.

Although it would be terribly rude to tell a Minis client, "I don't think you can afford our Mini Sessions" directly, it is not rude to be completely clear about your pricing and process with every inquiry. This is honesty! Our Mini Sessions ad graphic boldly states, "Session fee only. All prints, products, and digital files sold separately." When an inquiry comes via email (we never allow automatic booking), we reply with our entire pricing menu and Mini Session artwork specials to make clear how much they can expect to spend. At the same time, we have absolutely no minimum purchase requirements. Our success depends upon our ability to create a product they love. No more charging customers upfront, followed by: "Here's what you get, like or not. Don't let the door hit you when you exit your online gallery."

The more you are able to scare away unqualified inquiries with your pricing, the more efficient and profitable your Mini Sessions and your entire business will become. Since we began qualifying clients, we've been able to use our additional time and income to give back to our community in ways that truly serve the poor — donating our services to causes that do good for people in desperate need, rather than giving away discounts to bargain-hunters.





# Tip #4 BE CALENDAR- CONSCIOUS



As a professionally trained journalist, I (Phillip) was engrained with the notion that every project must have a strong time element. This idea will serve you very well when marketing Minis, too. In the news world, even old stories must be made to feel: 1.) current, and 2.) personal. This often means you spin the story to connect it to an upcoming anniversary or holiday, which all your readers are sure to be aware of.

The same is true for Minis! We advertise our Mini Sessions by default every year in early fall. It isn't just for the beautiful Georgia weather. We specifically advertise these sessions as Holiday Minis, making it clear that this is your family's opportunity both to update your portrait and purchase greeting cards before the holiday season! Now there is a sense of urgency. Because we've helped remind them of the calendar, the client feels a personal connection to the service we offer. Moreover, she feels a sense of urgency!

When you consider the calendar, don't forget to be timely. We begin our Minis marketing by sending an email to all our past clients, before our advertising goes public. We do this about four weeks in advance of our scheduled Mini Sessions, giving them advance warning and time to respond to this exclusive offer. We also offer them an incentive to refer their friends.

Your Minis don't have to be related to Christmas cards. Some of our most successful students specialize in "Mommy and Me" mini sessions closer to Mother's Day. Or springtime Minis, when everyone up North is anxious to put cabin fever behind them. Make your Minis personal to you and your community!



# Tip #5

## Choose a **VERSATILE** **LOCATION**

Now, where to host your Mini Sessions? Our best advice is not to make Minis too much “about the location.” If your photographic style is like ours when it comes to weddings and standard portraits, we love epic landscapes and architecture inspired artwork. But Minis are not about that. They are about efficiency and profitability for your business, and they’re about convenience and emotional value for your clients.

Choose a location that’s nearby to you. This isn’t meant to be a travel project. And even if you’re known for a lot of travel or destination work as we are, Minis are meant to appeal to locals. Using a nearby location makes it a community affair and an annual tradition for more families. It allows clients to pick up their prints in person and form a relationship with you, leading to wider brand awareness. And, finally, it means you can focus more on the expressions and interactions of growing families that they want to preserve!

Since our Mini Sessions are just 20 minutes each, I choose three backgrounds at the local park that I use for every family who comes through, back to back. I have three other backgrounds in mind, too, just in case the light moves throughout the course of the day. Since Mini Sessions are usually an all-day event, I’m not caught off-guard by this change. And it doesn’t matter if a few families have different backgrounds — they aren’t comparing their photos to the others anyway. It’s more important to us that every family has beautiful lighting for their portraits. No need to force a square peg into a round hole.





# BONUS Tip: MINI SESSIONS ALL YEAR



Did you think we were done? Not by a long shot! There's so much to learn about maximizing your Mini Sessions... and, as a result, revolutionizing your entire business!

Didn't we say before that you should limit Mini Sessions to just one or two events per year? Offering Mini Sessions year-round seems like a contradiction, right? But it isn't!

Remember, there's a huge difference between a publicly announced Mini Session event and a privately available session, offered on a case-by-case basis. For us, Mini Sessions are no longer a "dumbed down" version of a full-length session. They have become a completely different offering, perfect for and preferred by families with young kids who have short attention spans. Minis are also the perfect gift to donate to local charities or partner businesses, which leads to a huge referral network, which we maximize in order to advertise every aspect of our studio to the community!

# Was this helpful?

To learn more about how to maximize your mini sessions, sign up for one of our webinars!



## MAXIMIZING MINI SESSIONS

[bit.ly/blume-minis-free](https://bit.ly/blume-minis-free)



### ABOUT THE BLUMES

Phillip & Eileen Blume are award-winning photographers just crazy enough to believe art can change the world. As owners of three photography brands that specialize in weddings and portraits, the Blumes seek not only to celebrate life, but also to reclaim disadvantaged lives through humanitarian projects. Whether speaking at top industry events, presenting on the TEDx stage, or interacting with students inside their ComeUnity workshops, these on-the-go parents and industry leaders champion change-making through creativity.

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