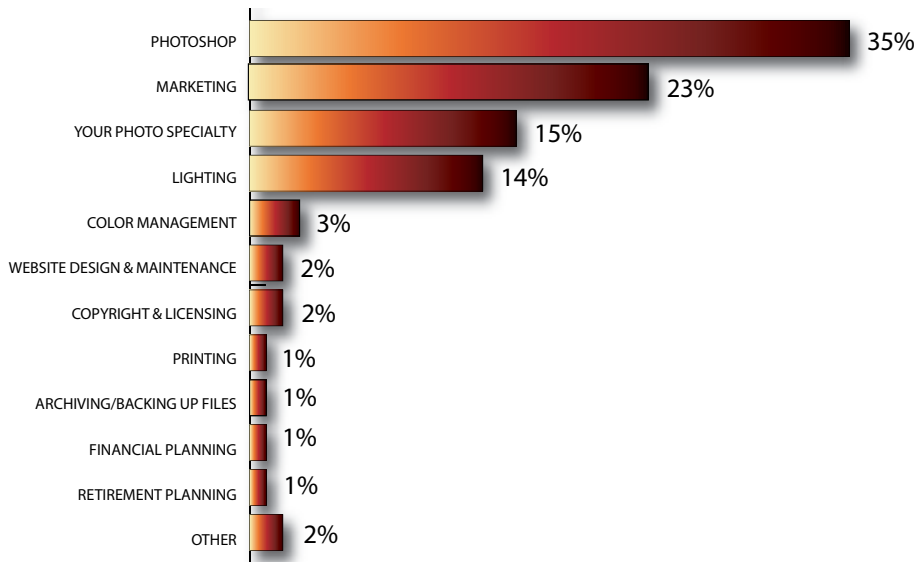


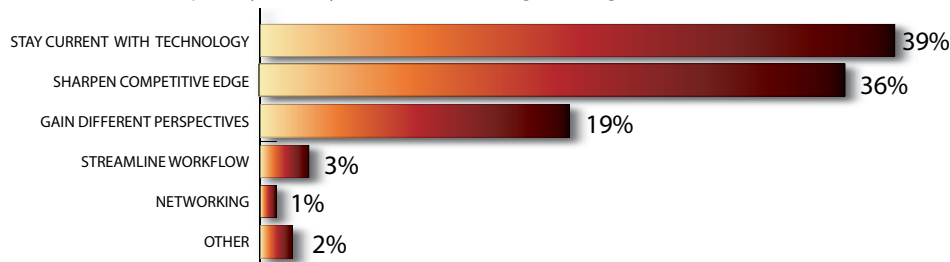
Do you participate in annual training?

The only constant in our industry is change, and with change come new technologies, new workflow, and new business strategies. In order to stay current and maintain that proverbial finger on the pulse of everything innovative, annual training is a necessity. This month's Peer2Peer question asks our readers what educational opportunities they take advantage of. With more than 600 respondents to our survey, 70% agreed that training through seminars, conferences, and workshops was very important. Here's more of what we found...

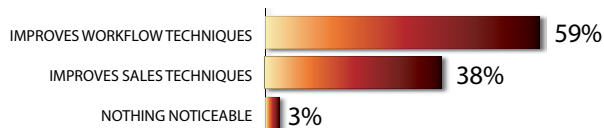
1. Which is the most important area for you and your staff to receive educational training?



2. What is the primary reason you take and encourage training?



3. What business benefits do you derive from educating yourself and your staff?



Observations

- Of those who responded to our survey, 34% answered that they find out about upcoming training opportunities online, while 24% answered through magazines, and 22% through mailings and emails.
- The primary locations for training included: stand-alone seminars (50%), trade shows and conferences (26%), and online (15%).
- Most of the photographers who answered our survey agreed that Photoshop (35%), marketing (23%), their photo specialty (15%), and lighting (14%) were the main focus areas for receiving more training.
- The majority of our respondents (39%) noted that staying current with technology was the main reason they take and encourage training, while 36% said that they took classes to sharpen their competitive edge, and 19% intended to gain a different perspective.
- Improving workflow techniques was the number-one benefit derived from training, according to 59% of our respondents.

Quotable Quotes

"Professional organizations and seminars have been the backbone of my business."
Bruce Dart, Photos by Dart, Mansfield, PA, www.photosbydart.com

"In looking across the training spectrum offered by such industry leaders as PMA, SPI, PPA, and WPPI, it would be hard not to be exposed to an extensive array of learning opportunities. Staying current with the offerings of these organizations has helped grow our company. We've found by attending trade shows we're able to keep abreast of industry trends from, as well as avail ourselves of, a variety of educational opportunities in the photography, digital, photofinishing, and business arenas. Staying current lends itself to staying competitive."

Ray Smith, Action Images Photography, Wellsburg, WV, www.actionimages.us

"I like to see what others are doing. I love adding a little from what I learn to what I already do, so that I won't get burned out doing the same things over and over."

Jon Arenz, BlackLine Photo, Brainerd, MN, www.blacklinephoto.com

"My assistant and I primarily get training through our state organization but occasionally attend workshops that I get notified about by email. With all the soccer moms getting into photography, we need to keep our edge, and one very important way to do that is through training."

John Lee, John Lee Photography, Newton, IA, www.johnleephoto.com

"I look for instructors who deal with the 'why' in addition to the 'how' of a technique. Specific techniques are O.K. and of limited value. Learning about the approach or philosophy helps me solve many more problems."

Bob Gibson, Blue Water Photography, Lincoln City, OR, www.bluewaterphoto.net

"I wish there were more educational opportunities that were not so self-promotional for either a company or an individual. Most of the seminars are tedious because they focus almost totally on the presenter and hardly at all on the needs of the participants. I have little patience for presentations that are not practical and that use poor-quality images as the examples."

Brooke Elkan-Moore, New Windsor, NY, www.LarryMoorePhoto.com

"I need more intermediate to experienced business/marketing techniques to be presented at conferences. Many workshops are geared toward the novice or beginner and are such a 'sampling' that they are not a good investment of our time to attend. Also, workshops that are NOT infomercials for the speaker's products would be nice."

Starlene Todd, StoryTeller Images, Clovis, CA, www.storytellerimages.com

"I recall listening to a speaker talk about his marketing skills. He raved on about the importance of keeping yourself informed and educated. Take at least one class a year that relates to your business; whether a retouching class, lighting, or marketing. He made his point very clear as he informed us of his jaw-dropping yearly earnings. His closing message was 'Success in photography is 90 percent marketing and 10 percent talent.' Judging from his work, I believed him. It should make sense that anyone with talent backed by knowledge should be successful in this tough industry."

Vincent L. Chan, Invisionation Photography, Vancouver, BC, www.Invisionation.com