

Anthony Vazquez
**SLOW AND
STEADY
WINS
THE RACE**

by Lorraine A. DarConte





Anthony Vazquez has been building his NYC-based photography business one wedding at a time. He started at the bottom some 15 years ago answering phones, running errands and the like at a local studio. That's also where and how he learned the art of taking great photographs. He opened his own studio at the ripe old age of 20 and now, 10 years later, is at the top of his game. "I started slowly," reiterates Vazquez, "taking on whatever I could in the beginning." Each year the business grew a little more and, according to Vazquez, it exploded in 2006/2007. "I haven't looked back since," says Vazquez, who today employs three photographers, an album designer, several assistants and an office manager (who also happens to be his mother).

Vazquez willingly shares a few of his secrets to success. One of these, he says, is to not focus too much on the competition. "I think it's irrelevant in any business or field," he explains. "At any given point there's going to be high competition, so you have to focus on creating an experience. I think that's the most crucial part of any successful business—the experience you offer your clients." Vazquez believes it's important to have a great relationship with clients because, out of all the vendors they'll hire for their wedding, the closest relationship they'll develop will be with the photographer. "Our philosophy is to engage couples on a deeper level. For us, the experience is not just about the shoot, but the products and books we create, which I think is a great way to brand yourself." Vazquez works with Graphistudio to provide clients with exclusive, high-end books in a style that he feels is different from what's being offered by most other photographers.





Style and Substance

Striking, edgy images that also capture the moment are the hallmarks of Vazquez' studio. "I think the style we have now is something that's different; it's a fusion of wedding photography meeting edgy fine art meeting photojournalism. It has a fashion-forward editorial feel to it that I think is unique to what we do." Vazquez says he pushes his photography to the limits. By that, he explains, he means he challenges himself to become a better photographer and grow as an artist each and every year. "Photographers must decide what their

vision for their work is, then try to capitalize on what's unique about it. For us, that means doing work that resembles an editorial fashion spread rather than a wedding photograph." To capture those once-in-a-lifetime stylish moments, Vazquez relies on Canon cameras (1D, 5D Mark II), video lights, CowboyStudio reflectors and a ring flash.

Vazquez also advises photographers to avoid focusing on business to the point that they lose their passion for photography, which should come first and foremost. "Stay aggressive and keep evolving," states

Vazquez, who notes how much the industry has evolved in the past 10 years, thanks in part to digital imaging and social media. "The style of the work also is completely different from 10 years ago, so photographers need to keep up with the evolution and be progressive. I think that's really important. Finally," he adds, "push yourself as an artist; really push the boundaries of conventional thinking when it comes to wedding photography and don't just settle for what people think you should do. The more you can push the boundaries and limits of what you do, I think, the better. If

you're true to yourself and shooting what you love, and can relay that passion to your client, you will definitely be successful."

WPPI Preview

For those attending this year's WPPI (February 16–23, 2012), be sure to check out Vazquez's event, "Get the New Out of Newbie." "For Las Vegas this year, we're focusing on the new photographer—people that are new to the wedding industry," Vazquez says. He and his team will present an overview of the industry that will include 10 things new photographers should

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do in order to be successful. "Also, I'll talk about some of the mistakes I made as a young photographer and how to avoid those pitfalls." One mistake Vazquez admits to making is trying to do too much too soon. Hence, he advises photographers

to take it slow, keep overhead low, let the business evolve naturally and not to get ahead of themselves. "Don't expect to conquer the world in a few days," reiterates Vazquez, who expects his WPPI session to be well received.



Vazquez, who's been a member of WPPI for nine years, says he loves the energy of the show and the fact that there's a forum for wedding photographers to gather each year and educate one another. "This is my ninth year at the show and my fourth year speaking," he says. "Going to Las Vegas each year makes me want to push myself; I think the exposure to all those great photographers makes me want to up the level of what I do here at my company more and more each year." In fact, Vazquez recently launched Anthony Vazquez Families, which is the new Portrait Division of his company. "My business is growing and so is my client base, which is now requesting family portraits as they're all starting to have children." So it's no surprise that at this year's WPPI, Vazquez will attend a handful of portrait photography classes taught by those who excel in this segment of the business.

"Other than that," continues Vazquez, "I'm refining the work I do, growing the business, evolving, teaching some great workshops, and hopefully booking more cool weddings and enjoying life. I get to travel the globe to take pictures, photograph weddings and teach workshops. It's the best of everything. I can't ask for a better job. And I don't think there is one."

For more information visit Anthony Vazquez online at www.anthonyvazquez.com.



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