

KATHRINE THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHY: A BUSINESS REBRAND

Honors Thesis

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Abstract

When you think of a company, you most likely picture their logo in your head. Having a recognizable brand is something that sets a business apart from others. This thesis focuses on rebranding my business, Kathrine Thomas Photography in order to appear more appealing and cohesive. This thesis examines the successes, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats my business faces with a SWOT analysis, and identifies current communication tactics and evaluates market competition in a situation analysis. This study also incorporates a survey of current clients to understand preferred communication modalities. As a result of this research, my website is now easier to navigate and informs potential clients about what it is like to work with me. I also created a brand identity kit that includes a color palette and typefaces to serve as a guide for my business. Overall, this research serves as a resource for small business owners in rebranding their own business.

Website can be found at: www.kathrinethomasphotography.com

Introduction

A brand is something that is immediately recognizable and makes a business stand out from others. Whether it's the colors, fonts, logo, or slogan, these are the elements customers associate with the business. I created my business, Kathrine Thomas Photography in 2016 taking senior photos. Each year, I have worked to improve my business by doing things such as offering new types of sessions, adopting industry standards, and improving my skills. However, one thing my business never had was a consistent brand identity that would make people think of Kathrine Thomas Photography. For my thesis, I created a brand identity for Kathrine Thomas Photography that I can integrate into my business model. The brand identity elements include a color palette, typefaces, and a redesigned website. To do this, I first conducted a situation analysis that looks at the history of my business, market competition, target audiences, and my current communication methods. I also conducted a SWOT analysis that analyzes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats my business has. Lastly, I conducted a survey of current clients to understand preferred communication modalities. The information and research I collected allow me to have a better understanding of my business and informed the redesign of my website. This thesis shows the importance of a brand identity and how it can improve your business by creating a cohesive look that clients recognize. It can serve as a resource for other small businesses who want to improve their brand and for public relations professionals who can use storytelling to enhance a business' brand.

Literature Review

What is branding? Wheeler (2017) defines branding as “a disciplined process used to build awareness, attract new customers, and extend customer loyalty” (Wheeler, 2017, p. 6).

Many businesses create a document called a brand identity kit in order to be consistent with their messaging. It is used “as a set of visual rules. Brand identity kits also set the rules for social media interaction and company message” (Velarde, 2019, para. 6). Elements such as color schemes, fonts, logos, visuals such as photography or graphics, and brand messages such as slogans can be included in a brand identity kit (Velarde, 2019). Any elements that are created or published should reflect the businesses’ brand identity.

Public relations is important to branding as well. Many customers want businesses to be authentic and transparent. Public relations plays a role in this by telling the story of a brand and sharing the history and message behind a brand. Storytelling is an important aspect of public relations and it “fits the traditional public relations role of creating connections with its publics through relationship and trust building” (Mikáčová & Gavlakova, 2014, p. 836). When a business uses public relations as a tool to tell an authentic story about the values behind a brand, they are improving their brand through public relations. Social media is another area where public relations can improve branding by communicating a carefully crafted message to key publics. Because social media involves two-way conversations, it is important for all messages to have meaning behind them and make connections with those publics to help build trust in the brand (Mikáčová & Gavlakova, 2014).

A SWOT analysis is a tool used to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats a business has. One advantage of conducting a SWOT analysis is its ability to be applied to both broad and small issues (Sarsby, 2016). Strengths are qualities a business has that set them apart from competitors such as resources and assets. Weaknesses include things that a business doesn’t have that competitors may do better such as limited resources and inconsistent messaging (Shewan, 2021). Opportunities are ways to improve on any weaknesses to turn them

into strengths and threats include “everything that poses a risk to either your company itself or its likelihood of success or growth” (Shewan, 2021, para. 13). The SWOT analysis is separated into internal and external factors. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors because they are things a business has control over. Weaknesses and opportunities are external factors that a business does not have control over. Small businesses can benefit from conducting a SWOT analysis because it can help to “not only identify these factors, but also develop and implement tangible roadmaps and timelines for potential solutions” (Shewman, 2021, para. 35). A SWOT analysis can provide insight to the performance of a business as a whole and identify areas that need improvement.

In *Establishing a Strong Brand Identity Through a Website: The Case of Greek Food SMEs* (Vlahvei et al., 2013), the authors discuss how small businesses can establish a strong brand through their website. The “ability to engage customers and facilitate an ongoing relationship with them is the real key to successful branding on the web. When delivered consistently, a brand shapes consumers’ perceptions and expectations” (Vlahvei et al., 2013, p. 772). It is important for businesses to have a clear and consistent message that represents their brand. Websites not only provide information to new customers, but are also a way for the customers to ask questions and for the business to learn more about potential customers who visit their website through surveys, newsletters, and more (Vlahvei et al., 2013). Nahai (2014) also discusses the importance of building a relationship with clients through a business’ website. The amount of trust a client has in your business can depend on factors such as the message of your business and how it is delivered as well as design features such as incorporating branding (Nahai, 2014). One important design feature is the way a website is set up. Easy navigation is essential for website visitors because “in most circumstances, users want to get in, find what they want . . .

and then get out, on their terms, whether that means two minutes or two hours” (Vlahvei et al., 2013, p. 773). Nahai (2014) describes the layout of most websites, which include a menu at the top with a logo and all the contact information at the bottom of the page. This simple layout allows visitors to focus on the important information on the website (Nahai, 2014). Other than being easy to navigate with a simple layout, the website should include information that visitors may want to or need to know. This may include a home, about, services, products, FAQ, testimonials, contact page, and more (Squirrel, 2021). The home page should capture visitor’s attention right away and describe what type of products and services the business provides. The home page is one of the most important pages as it will determine whether or not the visitor wants to explore the website further (Squirrel, 2021).

Situation Analysis

Business Overview

I began my business in 2016 after I took a friend’s senior photos and discovered I enjoyed photography and wondered what it would be like to run a business. It mostly started out as something I could do for fun and to further my photography skills, but it has turned into a job that provides me with a steady income while I am in school. Although my business mainly focuses on senior photos, I have photographed events, engagement photos, weddings, and graduation photos in previous years as well. I grow the number of clients I have each year and in 2021, photographed over 35 high school seniors. My goal has always been to provide clients with a fun and comfortable experience and deliver high quality photos that showcase their authentic selves. Throughout the years, I have learned and grown with my business, adopting industry standards by offering prints and sharing images through a professional online gallery. I

strive to improve my business in whatever ways I can to deliver the best possible product to my clients.

Business History

My business has grown in the number of clients I have each year and the variety of sessions I offer. The first two years I photographed between three and eight seniors, all from Chelmsford High School. Since then, it has grown to 35+ seniors from both Chelmsford High School and surrounding towns such as Lowell and Tyngsborough. I now take wedding and family photos as well. The process for taking senior photos and how the photos are delivered is also something I have changed since I started my business. In previous years, there would be no specified time limit on sessions and the clients would receive their images in a Google Drive folder. Instead of Google Drive, I now send clients their images in the form of a digital gallery on ShootProof, which is more professional, easy to navigate, and allows me to implement my brand into the galleries.

When I began, I did not include a watermark on my photos, which is now something I do. There are many reasons photographers put watermarks on their photos, but my main reason is for marketing and artistic purposes. When people share my images on social media, it has my business name in the corner, which gives me more exposure. Another reason is that a photographer's watermark is their way of signing artwork. An article written by Todd Vorenkamp asks:

How do photographers sign their art? Painters usually paint their signature, initials, or pseudonyms on their canvases as a final touch to their paintings. However, photographers never really had a way to “sign” their images, with the exception of a watermark. (Vorenkamp, 2016, para. 2)

Photography is a form of art, and many hours go into creating the perfect image, so I made the decision to add a watermark to my photos.

Market Research

There are over 200,000 photography businesses in the United States (IBISWorld, 2021). These businesses include portrait photographers, wedding photographers, family photographers, sport photographers, and more. Over the past five years, my business has been steady despite changes in the market. The pandemic affected many photography businesses, mainly wedding photographers and those who have studios, due to events being canceled and social distancing. (IBISWorld, 2021). Because my business focuses on senior photos and most schools still asked students to submit a yearbook photo, I was not affected. Looking at my business compared to the market, I believe I am on par with my competitors. I book around the same number of sessions as some competitors who run their business as a full-time job. Some things my competitors do that I do not are in-person gallery viewings and purchasing digital images separately. Many photographers do not include digital images available to download in their pricing and instead, clients schedule an appointment where they go into the studio to view the photos and purchase digital downloads and prints. I have had some clients tell me that they prefer the way I deliver photos because it is simpler.

One competitor that I learned about recently is Mr. & Mrs. Drew Photography, a husband-and-wife team that specialize in senior portraits and wedding photos. One thing they do well is write blog posts on their website to go along with each senior session. These blog posts introduce seniors by sharing where they go to school, the location they decide to take their photos, along with some tips for photographers. I like the idea of doing blog posts because it showcases the images along with a story that potential clients could read to get an idea of what

their session would be like, and it is a great way to connect with clients after their session.

Another thing Mr. & Mrs. Drew Photography do is a senior representative program, which is something many photographers offer to gain new clients. Senior rep programs differ depending on the business, but typically consist of a team of high schoolers going into their junior or senior year that get their senior photos done early and share their experience with their friends and classmates. Some photographers offer discounts or rewards based on how many referrals they get from their senior reps. In a blog post, Brooke Parra writes, “word of mouth is one of the most popular forms of advertising and referral programs give your clients a reason to keep talking about your company long after their session is over” (Parra, 2019, para. 1). Programs like these allow photographers to gain loyal clients while marketing to high school students. A potential competitor in the future is Allie.Photo, another photography business located in Chelmsford. Although Allie.Photo seems to focus on family, wedding, and newborn sessions, this business could become a competitor in the future if I decide to expand the number of family and wedding photos I do. The Allie.Photo website features client testimonials, something many photographers do that I believe would be beneficial to add to my website as well. Another element Allie.Photo has on their website is a page dedicated to client galleries. Clients are able to access their private galleries directly on the website by entering a password. I like this feature because it is an easy way for clients to view their images, but the images are still private and only those with the password can access them.

Target Audience Analysis

My current primary target audience consists of high school seniors and their parents. Although the seniors are the ones being photographed, their parents are typically the ones who reach out to book a session. Usually, the moms are the ones to inquire, so my target audience is

females who have children that are juniors and seniors in high school. I include juniors because I start marketing to juniors over the winter and early spring as they start to think about getting their senior photos done and do research on local photographers. My second target audience consists of young couples and families with young children. These are audiences I would like to focus more on in the future as I increase the number of wedding, engagement, and family photo sessions I do.

In order to better understand my target audience and running a business in my town, I researched Chelmsford, Massachusetts demographics. As of 2019, Chelmsford had a population of 35,391 with an average household income of \$134,520. Chelmsford residents are made up of 87.2% White, 9.2% Asian, 1.8% two or more races, 0.9% Black or African American, 0.0% American Indians and Alaska Natives, 0.0% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, and 3.3% Hispanic or Latino people. People who are under eighteen years old make up 20.7% of Chelmsford's population and 55% of Chelmsford residents are between the ages of eighteen and sixty-four. A total of 51.6% of the Chelmsford population are female (United States Census, 2019).

SWOT Analysis

In order to fully understand my photography business and what I need to improve on, I conducted a SWOT analysis. The goal of my SWOT analysis was to identify potential areas of improvement.

One of my business' strengths is that I have increased my number of clients and in the past two years, senior photos have been completely booked during my busy season, which is from July to the end of October. Another strength is that I am a Chelmsford High School alumni.

Because I graduated from Chelmsford High, I have a network of people who live in the area. Many people who live in Chelmsford like to support local business owners who have graduated from Chelmsford High as well, which leads to my next strength, word of mouth. A large percentage of my clients are recommended by or find me through previous clients. This is a big advantage, as it allows me to expand my network of clients to not only other seniors from Chelmsford High School, but neighboring towns as well. I primarily do portrait photography and a large percentage of the business I get comes from high school seniors, which is why it is important for me to market my business to clients looking for senior portraits.

Social media is something I take advantage of and another tool that brings my business success. Social media marketing “allows companies to establish a communication channel with its customers, market their products, build brand equity, and boost clientele faithfulness” (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012, p. 4444). I have an Instagram and Facebook business account, which I use to share photos from every session with relevant hashtags to reach a larger audience. Family and friends of my clients often share my posts to their feed, so their followers can see them as well. Social media allows me to connect with my current clients and show potential clients more about my business and what it would be like to work with me.

There are some aspects of my business that set me apart from competitors. Unlike many photography businesses, I include all of the best images from the session available to download without paying an extra fee per image. This means my clients receive more images included in the cost of the session than they would with another photographer who charges per image. I also let the clients decide on a location of their choice for the session and do not set a limit on the number of outfits they can bring. I think these aspects of my business are important because

clients often choose locations that are sentimental to them, such as family vacation spots. These strengths help my business stand out from competitors.

Although my business has many strengths, there are also weaknesses that need to be addressed in order to make improvements. One of those weaknesses is my website which I created in 2018 using Wix. I updated my website in 2020, adding more text to the homepage, but since then it has not been updated. Many of the photos featured on my website do not match my current editing style and I do not own a domain, which means my website isn't as likely to appear in a Google search for my business. Overall, the website needs to be restructured and updated to match my brand identity and I would also like to purchase a domain, so my business is easier to find online. Another weakness is that I am self-taught. I did not pursue a degree in photography, and I have taught myself photography and editing skills. Although this does not mean my skills are any less than someone who went to school for photography, it could potentially be viewed as something that sets me apart in a negative way.

I am also unable to operate my business as a full-time job while I am in school. Because I have class on the weekdays, I can only book clients on the weekends and cannot take as many clients as I would like to before I am fully booked. Even now, it is difficult to manage the number of clients I have. Other than my assistants who attend photoshoots to hold the reflector, I do not have a team of employees that could help answer emails, post on social media, or even sort through photos like many other studios have. Kathrine Thomas Photography's final weakness is that I do not have a studio. Many photographers rent a space that serves as their studio for editing, packaging prints and indoor photo sessions. This also allows for flexibility during inclement weather, especially towards the end of fall and during the winter. Despite these weaknesses, there is room for growth and opportunity to turn these weaknesses into strengths.

There are many opportunities to grow my business after I graduate. Although I am self-taught, there are ways I can turn this into a strength, such as taking online classes. There are many photographers who offer online training seminars and opportunities for business owners to learn more and further their skills. This is something I can take advantage of to refresh my knowledge and learn new skills. Even though I do not have a studio, equipment such as a backdrop set up and studio lights that would normally be in a photography studio are available to clients at my house. I have an opportunity to offer photos using this equipment to my clients more often because it is just as effective as it would be if I were in a studio.

Another opportunity my business has is expanding the type of photography I offer. In the future, I would like to offer more high school and college graduations, weddings, families, and engagement photos. I have photographed weddings and graduations in previous years, but still mainly focus on marketing senior photos. The college graduation mini sessions I did in 2021 were successful and I believe many graduates would be interested in graduation sessions again this year. Lastly, I could utilize TikTok to promote my business. I see many photographers sharing their images on TikTok and driving engagement to their other social media accounts. Photography accounts on this platform follow trends, do behind the scenes videos during sessions, show before and after photos, give tips to other photographers, and more. TikTok can also help reach a new audience that aren't on other social media platforms. This exposure can assist businesses in "retaining customers, getting new ones, and building overall brand awareness" (Halpern, 2021, para. 5).

Two threats my business faces are a short busy season and unreliable income during the winter. Expanding my business to wedding photography is something that could potentially resolve this threat. Wedding photography is very different from senior photos. It sometimes

involves traveling, is often a full-day event, requires a variety of equipment, can require multiple assistants, and sometimes a second photographer. These are factors I would need to consider before expanding my business further into wedding photography. While I photograph one to two weddings a year now, I would like to consider photographing more in the future, which is something I think could be possible once I graduate. New photography businesses starting or moving to my area are threats as well. Since the pandemic, I have noticed that many people have begun their own business or have relocated their photography businesses to Chelmsford. While it is something to keep an eye on, I am fairly established in Chelmsford, as I have been in business for five years.

A short-term threat my business faces is my busy schedule this semester. I am taking eight courses, working two jobs, completing an honors thesis, and am president of a student organization on campus. These are threats that will not last very long, but something to consider. Two long-term threats to my business are whether I will continue to live in Chelmsford and when I decide to start having children. If I decide to move, I will no longer get the same clients from word of mouth and in a way, it would be like restarting my business. I think I would be able to rebuild a client base in another location, but it may take a year or two and it would be important for me to focus on marketing. Having children in the future is another factor that could threaten my business and leave me with less time to complete my daily tasks. However, owning a business also allows for flexibility compared to a typical 9-5 job.

Communication Audit

Most of the communication that happens between clients and I is through emails and texts, which I found was clients' preferred method of communication through my survey with nine respondents choosing texts and four respondents choosing emails. A communication

strategy that has worked well in the past has been sending out a Google Form that clients fill out before their session. This form asks for their information, so I am able to reach them if needed, and it asks where they are interested in taking their photos. I believe this form can be improved by adding more questions in order to get to know the client even better and understand their needs before the session. One communication strategy that I believe would be beneficial for contacting clients about upcoming offerings would be a newsletter that gets sent to clients through email. I could send out information about future session offerings and exclusive discounts, which would allow me to stay in touch with past clients. Newsletters allow clients to learn more about your services and brand and build relationships with your clients (Jones, 2019). Many of my interactions with clients happen through social media. I post photos of every client on Instagram and Facebook unless they request that I don't share their images. This drives engagement to my social media accounts because their friends and family will interact with the post as well. Along with Instagram feed posts, I utilize Instagram stories by sharing videos from the session, doing interactive polls, and posting behind the scenes photos and videos with my assistants. I save all my stories to my Instagram highlights and have created highlights that give my followers more insight to my business such as "Meet the Team at Kathrine Thomas Photography" and "2020 highlights". In a blog post called "How to Use Instagram Highlights on Stories Strategically", the author reminds readers:

Your profile info is the first thing people see when they land on your account – that's why it's oh-so crucial to optimize your bio and use those Instagram Highlights to give your potential followers an instant understanding of what your offerings really are. (Rabo, 2019, para. 1)

In order to improve my business and learn which communication tactics clients prefer, I conducted a survey through Google Forms that was sent to the parents and guardians of the

seniors I photographed during the summer of 2021. I chose clients from 2021 because I was still in the process of working with them and the experience would be fresh in their minds. The survey consisted of ten multiple choice and short answer questions and I accepted responses for a week. The survey received a response rate of 56.5%. The first question I asked was, how did you find out about Kathrine Thomas Photography? Out of the six options, three of them were selected. The majority was that clients found out about my business by word of mouth, with 69.2% of respondents choosing that answer. A total of 15.4% found out about me through Facebook and the rest found my business through Instagram. This confirmed my belief that most of my clients hear about me through word of mouth. For the next question, I had clients rank which methods of direct communication they prefer in order of preference. A majority of the respondents chose communicating through text message with some preferring emails as well. I learned that clients' least preferred method of direct communication is through social media. I asked clients to rank how effective the messages regarding sessions and services were communicated and found that 69.2% ranked communication as a ten, the highest, and 15.4% ranked communication as an eight and nine. Over 80% of clients selected that they would be interested in receiving emails about future sessions and offerings, and 69.2% prefer to receive those kinds of messages through emails, which means newsletters may be an effective communication method in the future. I asked if the client or their child follow any of my social media accounts and found that the majority follow my Facebook and Instagram. Only 15.4% do not follow me on any of my social media accounts. The next question asked which Instagram features clients look at most in order to find out how I should be posting most of my content on Instagram and found that most clients prefer feed posts and Instagram stories. Only 7.7% selected Instagram Reels, a fairly new feature. I asked if there are any social media platforms I

don't currently have that they would like to see me use and this question only received two answers, both of them answering no. I then asked clients to rank the process of booking a session on a scale one through ten, one being difficult and ten being easy. A total of 75.9% of respondents chose ten, 15.4% chose nine and 1.7% selected eight. The last question on the survey asked clients if they have any other comments or suggestions for how I can improve client communication for Kathrine Thomas Photography. This question received six responses in total. Three of the responses were comments about how they thought the process was easy and they had no issues with communication. One response suggested a calendar or booking website to schedule a session so they can see my availability. Another client mentioned that they prefer emails rather than texts. The last respondent suggested sending a follow up email after the session with details on the print packages.

This survey allows me to see what changes I can make to my business in order to improve communication with my clients. Because a majority of the respondents are interested in receiving information about future sessions and specials, I believe a newsletter would be very beneficial to my business and allow me to connect with my clients even more and give them more insight to my business. I would also like to take their feedback about a booking calendar and follow-up emails with information about prints. Moving forward, I will look into a more effective way to schedule sessions that allows the clients to see my availability and follow up with additional information after their session.

Brand Elements

Since I began my business, I never had a consistent color scheme I used on my website, social media, and advertisements. An article about how branding can benefit your business states, "in many ways, you can appeal to people's emotions through branding and make them

feel more connected to your company. Branding allows you to build relationships with your audience, which can eventually turn them into loyal customers” (Jones, 2021, para. 14). I knew having a clear brand identity that is consistent across all of my platforms is something that would benefit my business, so I decided to choose a color palette and typefaces that fit how I want my business to be viewed. I began by doing research about which colors evoke specific emotions when people see them and selected four that I thought best represent my business. In an article that explains what emotions each color evokes and how it is important to branding, Ellis writes:

As a brand, you want to cultivate a strong emotional connection with your customers. The problem is you can’t tell your company’s entire life story in a logo or storefront—but branding colors provide a shortcut straight to your clientele’s hearts. (Ellis, 2017, para. 5)

The first color I chose was yellow because it catches people’s attention and represents happiness and youth. I think the emotions people feel when looking at this color represent my business because senior year is an exciting and happy time for high schoolers (Ellis, 2017). The next color I chose was blue and I included two different shades, light blue and a dark blue. Light blue relates to feelings of calmness and trust, while dark blue is professional and mature (Ellis, 2017). I thought these two colors would balance out the yellow visually and emotionally. I wanted my brand to be both playful and mature at the same time. The final color I chose was a peachy tan color. Because it is a shade of orange, it appears friendly and playful (Ellis, 2017). Other than the emotions these colors make people feel, they also go well together and have a similar color palette to the beach, somewhere I often take photos (see Figure 1).

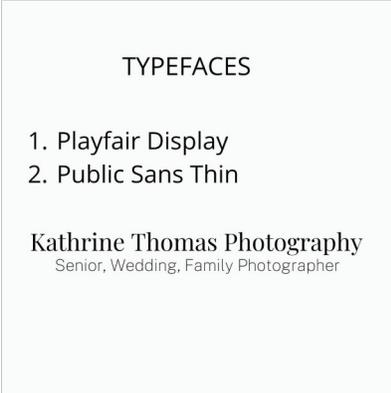
Next, I researched and looked at a variety of typefaces to choose two that would best represent my business. There are six categories of fonts, which include serif, sans-serif, slab serif, script, handwritten, and decorative (Nediger, 2019). I decided to choose a serif font for large text along with a sans-serif font for bodies of text. These two fonts are often paired together

for a look that is both classic with modern aspects. I selected Playfair Display as my header font with Public Sans Thin as my body text (see Figure 2).

Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Website

I created and designed a website for my business using Wix in 2019 to showcase my work, but since then, my business has outgrown that website design. I researched website layouts on Pinterest and looked at other businesses for inspiration. I knew I wanted to incorporate my new brand identity elements, keep it simple, and share more information about the booking process for senior photos, so I started a new website from scratch. This time, I purchased a domain name, www.kathrinethomasphotography.com, so people could easily find my website when doing a Google search. The main pages of the website are the home page, senior page, graduation page, wedding page, and the about / contact page. This layout is much easier to navigate, and clients can choose which session they are interested in directly from the home page. At the bottom of the home page, I include a section that highlights upcoming session offerings, so visitors can learn what sessions I am currently booking without having to search through every page.

According to *Website Branding for Small Businesses: Secret Strategies for Building a Brand, Selling Products Online, and Creating a Lasting Community* (Nahai, 2014), it is important to have a consistent design throughout a website. The home page is typically the only page that has a different design, while the design on the other pages are similar. This makes the information easier to digest and visitors know what to expect as they navigate the website (Nahai, 2014). I kept this in mind and designed the layout for each page to be almost identical, so visitors know how to navigate it. One of the biggest changes I made to my website was adding less photos and including more information about the session. On my old website, I would upload between eight and ten images per client, so the website was mainly photos without any information. In the new design, I made sure to include the process of booking a session, so potential clients will know a little about the process of senior photos before they book their

session. I included a form at the bottom of the senior page for clients to reach out to me directly through the website to inquire about booking a session. All of the pages include description of the type of session being offered along with samples of my work. I incorporated my brand colors and typography into the design and made sure to design the mobile site so the website would be functional for people viewing it on their phones as well. Although “web site design remains important in terms of usability, the central focus in the branding process is on communication and messages” (Rowley, 2004, p. 137).

Conclusion

By conducting a situation analysis to examine my business as a whole, I was able to create a new brand for my business of five years, Kathrine Thomas Photography. I identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of my business to determine where I needed to make improvements and help guide my decisions in the rebranding process. Surveying clients provided me with insightful information that can help me improve my communication tactics in the future to provide a better experience for clients. My research demonstrated how having a cohesive brand improves trust between a business and clients and how public relations can play a key role in branding by using storytelling to share the history and goals of a business. This thesis can be used as a resource for other small business owners looking to develop a cohesive brand. In the end, I was able to design a new website that combined my color palette and typefaces to appear as an identifiable brand.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

1. How did you find out about Kathrine Thomas Photography?

2. What method(s) of direct communication do you most prefer? Rank in order of preference.
3. On a scale 1-10 (1 being the worst, 10 being the best), how effective were the messages regarding sessions and services communicated?
4. Would you be interested in receiving emails about future session offerings and specials?
5. Where would you prefer to receive information about future offerings and specials?
6. Do you or your child follow any of my social media accounts? Select all that apply.
7. Which of the following Instagram features do you look at most?
8. Are there any social media platforms you would like to see what I don't currently have?
9. On a scale 1-10 (1 being difficult, 10 being easy), where would you rate the process of booking a session with Kathrine Thomas Photography?
10. Other comments or suggestions for how I can improve client communication for Kathrine Thomas Photography: