



ORGANIZATION SOLUTIONS

Policies and Procedures

Photo Organization

Printing photos for most clients stopped, or reduced dramatically, around 2005.

Making it necessary to approach the organization process from 2 fronts – photos from pre-digital time and the organizing of digital photos.

And by digital photos, we mean the photos that everyone has taken on their phones and cameras, but have never printed. Hundreds of photos are stored on computers, phones, hard drives, flash drives, etc.

What is the Goal?

Most clients are overwhelmed by the process and uncertain about - what they want, what their options are, how much time it takes to organize the photos, where to start.

- Photos located in one place?
- Photos sorted chronologically and stored in boxes?
- Printing all photos and creating “old fashioned albums?”
- Scanning old photos to create digital albums?
- Creating “old-fashioned” albums for the printed photos and creating digital albums for the photos on CDs?

Albums

If the goal of the client is to create photo albums, there are basically two kinds; the old-fashioned or traditional albums and digital books that are created online.

There are pros and cons to both kinds and these should be reviewed with the client so that they can make a more informed decision.

Organization

No matter what format the client chooses - the easiest way to organize photos is chronologically.

Creating albums for events or creating albums for each child becomes complicated. And the more complicated – the longer it takes and the less likely it is to be maintained by the client.

Creating an album for the big family trip to Africa is one thing, but creating an album for every summer vacation or every birthday is a huge commitment in time and money.



Tools Needed for the Organization Process

- ☒Rubber Bands
- ☒Post-It Notes
- ☒Pen / Pencil
- ☒Binder Rings (“Old Fashioned” Albums)
- ☒Client Information
- ☒Readers / Magnifying Glass
- ☒Clean Work Area

Getting Started

Getting started can be hard if the photos are yours. It can be paralyzing when you think about doing it for a family you haven't even met.

Our objective is to make the process as “scientific” as possible in order to make the process as efficient and accurate as possible.

The steps listed below provide valuable information and guidelines on sorting, dating, and organizing photos.

1. Gathering the Photos

No matter what format the client chooses – collecting all of the photos is the first step.

You want to make sure you have ALL of the photos before you get started. Finding photos after you have started a photo project can seriously delay or prolong the project.

For physical photos it will mean literally going around the house and getting the photos from wherever they are stored, and developing any undeveloped film.

For digital photos that will mean gathering photos off of camera cards, flash drives, old computers, old phones – any electronic device where the client has stored photos.

2. Dating Photos

Getting photos into chronological order (if that is the goal) is one of the most painstaking processes in the organization process! This is where many hours get spent and where the client incurs the biggest cost.

The more information we have about the family in ADVANCE of the Initial Sort - the more efficient and accurate we can be in getting the photos dated AND the best source of information is the client – so ASK.

The more the client can help in this process, the more accurate the results.

- Birthdates (Children & Parents)
- Big Trips - Dates
- Annual Trips Traditions (Spring Break, Summer...)
- Birthday Traditions
- Holiday Traditions
- Grandparent's Day

2A - Initial Sort

The first step in the dating process is called the Initial Sort.

The initial sort is just that, our first stab at identifying dates and getting photos grouped by year.

To start this process you will want to create a “location” for you to place the photos from each year.

For the physical photos it can be a shoebox, a grocery sack or a large table. For digital photos it could be a CD or flash drive for each year or a folder on the computer.

All “areas” should be properly labeled by year for easy identification!

You want to create a work environment that allows you to EASILY “drop” photos into the area designated for that year.

2B - Initial Sort – Dating

When starting the initial sort, the best place to start is with the photos that are dated. Find all photos with dates and get them sorted and grouped by year.

AT THIS STAGE YOU ARE GOING TO ASSUME ALL DATES ARE CORRECT.

Validating dates comes later in the process - at this stage you don't want to spend time organizing each year by month - that comes much later.

There are several kinds of dates and it's important to know what they DO and DON'T tell you.

- Developer Stamped Date
- Camera Date
- Receipt Date
- Client Dated
- Thumbprint Dates
- School Photo Dates

Tips & Tools

- Dates aren't always accurate
- Picture sizes and shapes can narrow down a decade
- School and sport pictures are a great tool for dating photos
- Information can be found in the picture itself

Developer Dates

- Not all photos will have information printed on the back.
- And, of those photos with printed information, only around 50% will have information that includes the date.
- If the date is included, it is more than likely correct, but errors have been found.
- Only thing the date tells you is when it was developed – not taken.
- Errors are most often caught when photos for each year are sorted by month.
- Other information printed is useful when you are dealing with “loose” photos or “singles” that you are trying to group and identify.

Camera Set Dates

- This date is the date shown on the front of the photo
- This date is typically a date generated and controlled by the client.
- Ask the client how accurate they believe the dates are

Receipt Dates

- Probably the most accurate date as it is generated by the register.
- It's not common, but photos do get put in the wrong envelopes. Keep that in mind if
 - something doesn't make sense.
- Only thing the date will tell you is that the photos were developed – not taken.
- Keep photos with the envelopes till the bitter end so that you know where you got the date.

Client Dated

- Accurate more often than not, but they are not error proof.
Even Mom's forget, especially when they are dating several years after the fact.
- Typical only wrong by a year – either direction

Index Card Dates

- Least Reliable
- Red Flags
 - Dated 0/0/00
 - Dated 1/1/99
 - Dated 1/1/00
 - Large group of photos dated the same

3. Non-Dated Photos

After all DATED photos have been addressed you need to tackle all NON-DATED photos.

Tackling what's left seems an impossible task, however, our goal is for this process to be as accurate, efficient and painless as possible.

Toward that effort, it will be important to pay attention to less obvious clues in determining dates. Start with the photos that will be easiest to figure out.

Example...

- Birthday Parties
- Christmas Photos
- Easter Photos,
- Annual Spring Break Trips
- Rodeo Photos

Attack these photos one event at a time and use the information provided by the client to best calculate the year.

Visual Clues

- ☐ Birthday cake reads "Happy 5th Birthday Jack"
- ☐ Birthday cake has 7 candles
- ☐ No children in the Christmas pictures
- ☐ Only have Easter baskets for 2 children, not for all 3.
- ☐ Braces? Glasses? Broken Arm? Hair Length?
- ☐ Does anything in the picture have a date?
- ☐ Grandparents in the picture
- ☐ Hair Styles
- ☐ Clothes

4. Mission Possible

It is inevitable that you are going to get to the end of the sorting process for dated and non-dated photos AND still have some straggling photos that you can't figure out.

The goal is to make this stack as small as possible, BUT you don't want to spend endless hours trying to date the last of the last.

Gather the remaining photos and get them grouped as best as possible.

You may not know the exact date, but can you narrow it down within a couple of years?

Keep Them Visible

All non-dated photos need to be kept accessible and VISIBLE during the remaining photo process.

As you start working on the photos year by year, you want to continually reference the non-dated photos.

Many of the stragglers are single photos that have gotten separated from a larger group, and as you work year by year, month by month, you will find that you can match those photos much easier.

5. Year by Year

Once you have completed all of the previous steps - you will start addressing the photos year-by-year.

Start with the oldest year and work your way to the current year.

Working your way through the years allows you to "watch" the kids grow and change through the years; making it easier for you to spot photos that are out of place.

Natural Flow within a Year

- Rodeo Picture
- Valentine's Photos
- Easter Photos
- Spring Break
- 4th of July
- Summer
- Back to School
- Halloween
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas

6. Month by Month

Our goal is to create albums that are not only sorted by year, but sorted by month.

We want the albums to have a natural flow that takes the client through the year, month by month.

Use common sense and the clues. You may not have the exact month, but you'll be able to get them in the right neighborhood.

The objective is to create a flow that seems natural. The objective is NOT to spend hours and hours contemplating if the pool pictures were taken in June or July.

Using the Clues

- ☑ Pool pictures – Summer months
- ☑ School play pictures with Pilgrims - November
- ☑ Pictures of kids in wagon wearing red/white/blue and waving small flags – 4th of July
- ☑ Pictures of kids wearing hats and jackets – Winter months
- ☑ 1st day of School Pictures - August

7. Natural Flow within an Event

Within events you want to the flow of photos to be natural as well.

For instance – don't start the photos of the birthday party with the kids eating cake – that typically happens at the end of the party.

8. Album Creation – Things to Consider

- ☑ What kind of album are you creating?
- ☑ Is there a limit to how many photos / pages you can have in the book?
- ☑ Are you creating a book for each year?
- ☑ How many photos go in each book?
- ☑ How many photos do you have?
- ☑ Do you have the same number of photos for each year?

9. Eliminating Photos

Not every photo needs to be included in the photo album AND not every photo is deserving of being in the album

There are quite a few photos that are easy to eliminate and the list below is where you should start when eliminating photos.

- Embarrassing Photos
- Duplicates / Triplicates
- Too Many Photos of One Event
- Out of Focus / Too Dark / Damaged
- Pictures without People
- Nature / Scenery Shots
- Not a Great Picture of the Person
- People are too Far Away

10. Rejected / Returned Photos (Physical Photos)

All photos that are not used in the creation of the albums should be returned to the client.

No photos are to be destroyed or thrown away by Squared Away and ALL need to be returned to the client who can decide what they want to do with those photos.

All photos being returned to a client should be returned in a way that is representative of our work. They should be nicely boxed in proper photo boxes in chronological order. Each year should be properly labeled on an index card and the front of each box should be properly labeled.