



# Totaro Photography Owner - Rob Totaro

**Success Magazine: Rob, when did you become interested in photography?**

Rob Totaro: I became interested in photography while attending Canisius College in Buffalo, New York. I was taking an elective course in photography with Tom Wolf when he approached me because of my experience in sports marketing. He needed someone to help market the sports photography side of his business, and he ended up turning me into a photographer in six weeks. I worked with Tom for three more years, and the love of photography has stuck with me ever since.

**SM: You originally started Double Exposure Marketing in 2008. What were your goals for this venture?**

RT: I wanted to create a company that was able to handle many of the creative aspects that small businesses and non-profit organizations are not always able to achieve with their staff. I decided to combine my twelve years of marketing experience and five years of photography experience into one endeavor.

**SM: Why did you branch off into two separate businesses with Totaro Photography?**

RT: After about six months as Double Exposure Marketing, the photography side of the business began to develop (sorry for the pun). When that happened, I decided to make it more personal. And, since I was mostly selling myself to clients, I knew I needed the name of the company to reflect the personal attention each client receives. That's when I began to brand Totaro Photography as a separate segment.

**SM: What type of photography do you specialize in?**

RT: I work mostly with corporate and event photography—photographing the people and places that make businesses grow. I also photograph everything from graduations to golf outings. But my true love will always be sports photography.

**SM: How many photographers do you currently employ?**

RT: Totaro Photography is truly a family-owned business. I am the only full-time employee, but I call upon my father, Mike, with his twenty-plus years of photography experience to help ease the workload at

times. I've also brought in my mother, Donna, and fiancée, Lisa, for some of the bigger events. This summer I look forward to adding my sister, Nicole, to the photography mix now that she has graduated from Hartwick College with a degree in art. Additionally, I have two college interns and am always on the lookout for young talent looking for experience.

**“I love capturing the defining moment of a situation, when the whole scene and all its emotion is visible in a single frame.”**

**SM: You worked with the Buffalo Bills. What is the most important thing you took away from this experience?**

RT: Pay attention! I remember my first game was a pre-season game against the Vikings. I had my assignment to follow an individual player—I was focused and locked it. All of the sudden, I heard the other photographers scatter. I turned the lens and my head just in time to see Dante Culpepper whiz by my nose. He may be a quarterback, but that guy is huge!

That “near-death” experience taught me to always pay attention and keep your head on a swivel, so to speak. In both photography and business, the next opportunity is just around the corner, but if you are a second early or a second too late, it could spell disaster.

**SM: Where did you work prior to starting Double Exposure Marketing?**

RT: I spent four years as assistant athletic director with the University at Albany. I was responsible for marketing, tickets, and coming up with those funny

halftime promotions. Before that, I spent two years as assistant general manager with a professional baseball team in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and also ran a full-service photo lab in Clifton Park.

**SM: How did this position help to launch you into your current role?**

RT: I was given a lot of responsibility very quickly while at U Albany. I learned how to manage multiple projects and how to develop creative marketing solutions with a tight budget. It was this experience, combined with great support from the associate athletic director, and long-time friend, Charlie Voelker, that led me to open the new business. It was a perfect time in my life and I had a lot of support from respected business leaders and my family.

**SM: You recently opened a studio. How has this helped to further expand your business?**

RT: I opened my studio in the Washington Avenue Armory, at the corner of Washington and Lark Streets in Albany, in December 2008. I was doing some work for the arena and they had some fantastic space available, so it was a natural fit.

The new space has allowed me to expand my offerings into headshots. I have many business people who not only invite me into their business to photograph company headshots in my portable studio, but I also have businesspeople, actors, models, families, who come right into the studio in the Armory.

**SM: What do you enjoy most about your job?**

RT: I love the challenges and creativity that each new day brings. I love going the extra mile for a client, not because it is a great business strategy, but because it is the right thing to do. I love working with non-profits; the people who run and volunteer for those organizations are incredibly dedicated and their enthusiasm drives me through events. But more than that, I love capturing the defining moment of a situation, when the whole scene and all its emotion is visible in a single frame.

**Totaro Photography**  
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