

Platform and App Connecting Photographers with Clients and Businesses – Search, Compare and Book



Vitaliy Rizhkov
CEO & Founder
PICR Inc.

CEOCFO: *Mr. Rizhkov, what is the concept behind PICR?*

Mr. Rizhkov: It is a platform that connects photographers with potential clients. Clients can search, compare and book photographers on the spot.

CEOCFO: *Is this a new idea?*

Mr. Rizhkov: It is a brand new idea. Nobody has done this before. There is a great deal of websites where photographers can create listings for their business, but not much else. Once you find a photographer on those websites, you then have to contact the photographer by phone or email, figure out if they have available time in their schedule, how much their service is, how many images they deliver, how far they are willing to drive, etc. Chances are that they are going to be unavailable at the time you need them or their rates will be too expensive for your budget. Most likely, the listing will not contain all of the details you need, so you have to set aside time and research those photographers to find the right one. The process for a client to book a photographer unique to their occasion is a huge hassle right now. This is the problem that we at PICR are trying to solve.

CEOCFO: *How are you getting participation from photographers?*

Mr. Rizhkov: We are building a tremendous amount of value within PICR. Some features within the platform include: booking sessions with clients, a business calendar to mark the days they are available, and project management. They can build their profiles through our site to showcase their images and experience. Even without the marketplace side, there is tons of value in PICR for photographers to use for their existing clients. This is how we were able to gain a lot of interest from photographers.

CEOCFO: *How are you reaching potential clients?*

Mr. Rizhkov: We are still testing many different channels, including paid media, social and many different marketing hacks. I cannot say that we have found a channel that works for us yet, but there are some that work, some things that do not, so we still continue testing until we find the right ones that perform best. There are still many channels that we have not had a chance to explore but we will test within the coming few months.

CEOCFO: *Do many people recognize the challenges when they are looking for a photographer or is it something people realize once they start the process?*

Mr. Rizhkov: They probably realize it when they start the process. Many clients do not realize that there is even a problem in the industry because they are so used to the existing process. They are not even thinking that it could be

improved and be so convenient as it is with PICR. They are spending hours and days searching for perfect photographers. Some of the clients are fine with the existing process, but as soon as they come across the platform, and learn about it, they wonder why nobody else has done this before and think it is so convenient and easy to use, so they jump onboard right away.

CEOCFO: *Might you work with event planners, wedding planners and people in the industry?*

Mr. Rizhkov: Right now, I am talking to a few event planners, event coordinators and those in similar businesses. This is something we're planning on doing more in the future.

CEOCFO: *Will you be focusing on bigger cities where there are more photographers?*

Mr. Rizhkov: Our plan is to launch city by city and eventually in the entire country and then move on to different countries. Right now, our biggest goal is to make sure that we have a product that our customers love and cannot live without, especially the photographers. As soon as we get this type of product market fit, we are going to start launching in different cities.

CEOCFO: *Are you funded for the steps and are you looking for investment or potential funding?*

Mr. Rizhkov: We are not at this stage. We have one investor and we bootstrapped quite a bit. Our initial funding was basically a Seed round, and we are going to start looking for other funding probably in about six months or so to raise Round A Funding.

“The process for a client to book a photographer unique to their occasion is a huge hassle right now. This is the problem that we at PICR are trying to solve... The business model is simple; we don't get paid unless the photographers do... PICR is changing the whole photography landscape. We are not just trying to create a company; we are trying to change the photography industry as a whole. We are changing how photographers behave, how their clients behave, and changing how they are going to work and grow their businesses. The photography industry has not been disrupted for probably the last 30 years and it is very stubborn right now. We have entered into an era of platforms and it is only a matter of time before photography will need to get on board. All of the photographers agree that this new approach is critically important for the industry. Our idea and approach seems like the best they have seen so far.” - Vitaliy Rizhkov

CEOCFO: *PICR was recognized as one of the 100 best companies to work for in Washington. What is it like to work at PICR?*

Mr. Rizhkov: It is a great culture. I personally invested a lot of my time to build a great culture where people feel like they are in a family. Our culture is not just about the team, but also about the whole company, our clients, photographers. People love to work for PICR, to work with PICR and to partner with PICR. It is a little different from a lot of companies. We have a four-day work week and we are always taking care of people. We consider people as a priority and the revenues come secondary for us.

CEOCFO: *How do you help a customer narrow down a photographer? What tools do you provide so they can figure out who would be best for them?*

Mr. Rizhkov: When clients search for photographers, the first thing they do is input their location by zip code or city. Then they select a specialty, for example wedding photographers, and then can select a specific date. We send them to a search results page, where they see all of the photographers who are in that area doing wedding photography and who are available on the selected date. Then they can sort those photographers out by relevance, price, popularity and by their ratings. They can click on the photographers they like and go to their specialty page or to their listing, see what they are offering in their packages and learn more about the photographer. They will also be able to chat with the photographer through our messenger feature. We built it in a way that when you write something to a photographer, they will receive a notification on their mobile app and can reply instantly. This is a streamline that we have built so far to help you pick out the right photographer.

CEOCFO: *What is the business model?*

Mr. Rizhkov: The business model is simple; we don't get paid unless the photographers do. We charge a flat 5% service fee to all clients and charge photographers a marketing fee only if we bring them a client. If our photographers bring their own clients into the platform, than everything is free for them for the lifetime of that client. Our marketing fee ranges from 9-15% depending on the total of the booking.

CEOCFO: *What can we expect a year from now?*

Mr. Rizhkov: I think a year from now, we will be growing rapidly. We will be in at least ten different cities across the nation. We will probably be launching in new cities every two weeks or so. That is my expectation.

CEOCFO: *Why pay attention to PICR today?*

Mr. Rizhkov: PICR is changing the whole photography landscape. We are not just trying to create a company; we are trying to change the photography industry as a whole. We are changing how photographers behave, how their clients behave, and changing how they are going to work and grow their businesses. The photography industry has not been disrupted for probably the last 30 years and it is very stubborn right now. We have entered into an era of platforms and it is only a matter of time before photography will need to get on board. All of the photographers agree that this new approach is critically important for the industry. Our idea and approach seems like the best they have seen so far.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine



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