

Insider's tips How to execute a great photo shoot

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for smart marketing

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Photo shoots can be a cost effective way to update your existing marketing materials. But the key to making your photo shoot a resounding success – whether it's in the studio or on location – is planning ahead. Creative direction should be established long before the photo shoot takes place.

Ask yourself the following questions

- Is photography the best visual solution?
- Are there other options?
- What current photography exists?
- What are the four to seven most amazing “must-know” facts or tidbits surrounding this client/project?
- How can we demonstrate them through photography?
- Who are the people (photography subjects) who lend themselves to the strongest stories and facts?
- What non-human subjects (places, objects, concepts) lend themselves to visual representation?
- What is the overall thrust of the brand/campaign?
- How will the style of photography capture or complement it?

Important things to keep in mind

- Color(s)
- Style (depth of field, lenses, effects, etc.)
- Location(s)
- Props
- Improvs
- Neutral space
- Pairing's with typography/graphic elements
- Lighting: Natural light is typically best, even in indoor settings. In general, mornings and afternoons are best for outdoor shots. High noon is bright, unflattering light.

Make your initial shot list

Rate every proposed shot on a scale of one to ten (1 = low, 10 = great) according to the following criteria:

- Storytelling
- Credibility
- Brand support
- Brain rattling
- Cliché
- Whenever a photo is less than an eight, rethink it.

Finalize the schedule

Give yourself plenty of time. Make certain that all participants and locations are scheduled and ready before the shoot date. This means, scouting locations beforehand (Do locations need to be reserved? Are they presentable?), informing participants of dress codes, shoot times, and anything else that may affect them day-of.

Contact and remind participants

Don't assume that everyone will remember the shoot. Email them. Call them. Send out friendly reminders. In other words, make certain they show up on time.

Make sure props are handy

Depending on the type of shoot, props may make the difference between a believable photo and a boring one. For instance, if you're on a shoot for a university, make sure all the stuff students use during the day is available (computers, books, college logo wear, t-shirts, sweatshirts, sports equipment, etc.). Thinking through the details beforehand will help you utilize your time on set (or on location) wisely.

Speak up

As a client, you know your project/campaign better than anyone. So don't be afraid to talk to the photographer. Are there "must-see" locations? Do you have a different vision for a shot you'd like to capture? If you don't talk now, you'll be left with images you're not 100 percent satisfied with.

Creativity grows out of collaboration – so share your ideas.



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