

THE PAGE GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE PHOTOGRAPHY FOR PUBLISHING

Decent photographs can add a great deal to a piece of published work be it for print or the web. The adage that a picture tells a thousand words is very true but with it comes a caveat: The photograph has to be at least half decent!

The difference between a very good amateur photographer and a decent professional photographer is vast. For all commercial or major projects (such as a brochure or company website), we would always recommend using a professional.

However, there are times when this is not practical or budgets do not allow it.

The following provides a very brief overview of how to “do it yourself”.

1. KIT			
Camera	Digital	Digital cameras are now more popular than film based units – and with good reason. They remove the need to scan photographs, remove the need and cost of developing and provide the ability to review your photos as you take them. Images can also be sent via e-mail, the moment you take them (even in some cases, via a mobile phone!)	<p>What to look for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Lenses.</u> As with film cameras, the lens is the most crucial element in providing a good, crisp image. Look for makes such as Ziess or Contax. Canon also have a good reputation for optics • <u>Pixels.</u> The more the merrier (and unfortunately, the more money!). If you intend images to be used on billboard posters, display stands and other large format applications, this is a vital requirement.
	Film	Digital is good but don't discount film! This format still provides far more creative flexibility and if skin tones are your thing – then nothing gets close to celluloid!	<p>What to look for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lenses. More critical than digital. Your camera should ideally have interchangeable lenses and upgrading to a better quality make can provide drastic quality improvements.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film. 35mm or 120mm only. Choose a slow speed (100ASA) and a good brand. • Developing. A 1 hour supermarket service is OK but will never come close to specialist hand developing. Not much more money but far superior results.
Lighting	Integral	Most integral flash units provide good bursts of light for all occasions although do lack flexibility in certain situations and are generally useless at lighting anything more than 3 to 4 metres away	
	Separate	Separate units provide that flexibility, have a greater range and some offer intensity settings to allow for "fill in" lighting.	Look for models that provide "swivel heads". This will allow you to bounce light off walls and create a more natural feel.
Tripods		Much overlooked accessory and a highly recommended addition to any kit bag	Many styles are available and all do the same job – keep the camera still. If your camera has a facility for a cable release, buy one of these too.

2. TIPS	
Time of day	For outdoor photography, the best times of day are just after dawn and before dusk. The light tends to be richer and shadows are more easily managed
Lighting	Wherever possible, use natural available light. If shooting indoors, move subject close to a window.
Detail	Check what is going to be seen in the picture. Remove things like wastebins, and other clutter from the field of view.
Respect	When shooting people, respect their wishes. Many people don't like having their picture taken (although they are always the first to want to see it!). Never force someone into posing.
Keep it natural	When shooting groups or individuals, try these tips:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get them to fill their cheeks with air and then release slowly. The silliness of the act always raises a natural smile and when this occurs ; SNAP! • Set the camera on a tripod and frame the shot. Keep your finger on the shutter release button but move your eye away and stand up straight and start talking to the subject – just as you do, SNAP! They will not be expecting it and so the shot will be more natural • If possible, use a longer lens and shoot people from a distance. Remember to always tell them what you've done though! • Don't get people to pose in a manner that they normally wouldn't adopt. • Have fun! If you are enjoying the process then the people you are photographing will also have fun!
Framing	Avoid the common mistake of centering everything in the viewfinder. If you are taking a portrait, turn the camera and frame the subject so that the top of their head is just below the upper most part of the frame. Pay attention to what's in the shot and where things should go.
Be Creative	Don't be afraid of trying something different. Try a different angle. Play around with the lighting. Avoid clichés. One suit handing over a big cheque to another suit has been done to death! – Fill a pillow case with screwed up paper and draw a big £ sign on it and use that instead!
Egos	Everyone has an ego and likes to look good in photos. Always shoot from a slightly higher level than your subject. This forces them to look up, which stretches the skin, which makes them look a bit younger and reduces the appearance of double chins.

3. TECHNICAL	
Film	Colour transparency (slide) film is preferable Hand processing ideally 10 x 8 size prints
Digital	Use highest possible setting If option available, save as CMYK Jpeg Always copy the file and keep safe