

Photo Talk

A newsletter of photographic trends and the world through these eyes.

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Welcome to another in an occasional series of newsletters

from Dwight Cendrowski, Detroit-area corporate, editorial and agency photographer since 1978.



Young doctors, for Set Seg Insurance Co.

Stock images to go



"And what would YOU like?"

License stock images from lifestyle, healthcare, business or academia. All photos are rights managed and delivered fully color corrected in file sizes to suit your project.

Photography for life-sized display

Measuring 44 feet, the dairy display was photographed for The Dannon Yogurt Company. Eleven, four foot sections were photographed separately, then merged and perspective corrected in Photoshop.

Hiring a photographer

Finding the right photographer for a company or agency project often involves a dizzying array of photo specialties, terms, styles and business expertise. Anyone with a camera and some business cards can hang out a shingle. And with digital photography now the norm, it's even easier for someone with marginal talents and business acumen to pose as a professional.

To boost the chances of finding the best person for your brochure or promotional project, keep these seven steps in mind:

1. Professional is the key word. Since there are no licensing standards for photographers, you'll need to look at other signs of competence and reliability. Start by asking your colleagues for recommendations.

2. Continue your search by visiting the Websites of professional organizations like American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP), the largest trade association of photographers in the country. ASMP sets standards for admittance, so you're more likely to find an experienced person there. Go to: www.asmp.org.

3. Internet search engines like Google and Yahoo will yield a large number of potential photographers in your area, but remember that the flashiest Website doesn't necessarily mean the best photographer for your project. Be sure to hire someone whose skills fit your needs. A product photographer, for example, most likely will not be the best choice for candid people photography.

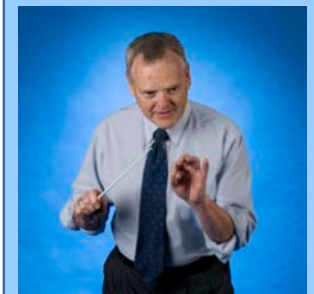
4. Ask the right questions. When you talk to a photographer, ask about professional affiliations. What companies like yours has he or she worked for recently? Do they carry liability insurance? If you're getting stuttering answers at this point, it's time to move on to someone else.

5. Don't fall into the trap of shopping just for price instead of value. A lowball estimate might sound like a bargain until you find yourself saddled with amateurish photos and poor business practices. An experienced photographer with professional capabilities and equipment has value that far outweighs a higher fee.

6. Understand the fee structure. Most experienced photographers factor in usage as a critical part of their creative fee. Generally, the more extensive the media exposure and higher profile the project, the higher the fee for producing it. Any photographer calling himself a professional should be asking you a number of questions about the project, from usage to duration to onsite conditions and delivery dates. Once a photographer has all the information, expect a written estimate to be faxed or e-mailed to you. This should spell out all aspects of the job, including times and locations, usage, expenses and terms. If a photographer says, "We don't need to write anything down," find someone with professional practices. Finally, all images delivered to you should be accompanied with a delivery memo.

7. Keep in mind that photography has been undergoing a revolutionary change toward digital these last years. You'll need to understand this new technology and increase the capability of your company to handle digital images. A graphics support person may be essential to assure photos appear in print as envisioned by the photographer. And by the way, if you've found that digital photos just don't look right, the problem may be with your monitor. In order for you to see on your monitor what the photographer sees on his or hers, you'll need to calibrate the monitor to industry standards using software like ColorEyes or Spyder.

Dwight Cendrowski has been photographing for national clients for 31 years from his Detroit area base. \$



Photos of music store owner for MMR magazine

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