

Power Your Brand With Photography

Taking The Right Approach To Corporate Photography

Why getting corporate photography right is so important for your businesses, and how to source the best while avoiding the pitfalls of commissioning your company's imagery.

When promoting your products and services to the outside world, the camera lens can be more powerful than a radio campaign, and more direct than a telesales campaign. Illustrating corporate literature brings products and services to life, and puts a corporate face to a name. It gives customers a chance to familiarise themselves with your business, before doing business with you, and creates an identity for your brand and image that is instantly recognisable.

But commissioning a professional for the job is often perceived as a costly and unnecessary expense. As a result, many businesses attempt to create images in-house – and that is a risky option.

Creating The Right Impression

Without knowing some of the tricks of the trade, do-it-yourself photography invariably results in poor quality images that give out the wrong signals to customers and leave you with an underwhelming set of images that make your brand and company image look second-best to your competitors. Very often it is the lack of attention to detail in amateur photography that prompts your audience to question the quality and integrity of the products, services and personnel you are presenting. While local companies may provide quality services and products, poor use of photography will simply give the opposite impression.

Imagine you need a shot of the Managing Director for a press release. Someone in the office takes it with a compact camera, with no consideration for the lighting or the professional and authoritative qualities that it should convey. Unless you're blessed with a skilled photographer in-house, the end result will invariably be disappointing at best.

Getting corporate photography right relies on good preparation, background research and a developed sense of what you want to achieve. The best starting point for any business is to determine how the images will be used – whether online, as part of a brochure or displayed on a billboard. By considering how the photograph will fit into its final destination, factors such as proportion and page design can be built into the planning process from the outset.

When it comes to planning the look and feel of the photograph, researching styles and effects will help you to enhance the way your subject is presented. Simple tweaks, such as tilting the camera lens at a different angle or taking a photo from height, are easy to experiment with and can be used to accentuate the best features of a subject. Lighting is also important for projecting a professional look - for example, hard lighting shows up more imperfections than soft, and a black and white shot appears more sophisticated than colour. In the same way, exaggerating lines and perspectives highlights particular objects or features by bringing them to the forefront of the image.

Setting out these criteria in a detailed plan enables businesses to follow a strict design path, incorporating factors such as weather (for an outdoor photo-shoot), the right background or setting and props. Crucially, when judging the end result, companies must make absolutely sure the image invokes the right first impression and stands up as a mark of professionalism - anything less will just undo the hard work and effort invested in the project.

Commissioning Advice

Enlisting the services of a professional photographer is an alternative to the in-house approach. But choosing one photographer over another is a tricky path for companies to tread. How to select the right professional for the job is an intimidating prospect, particularly for companies not involved in the photographic industry and where budget concerns are a factor.

The first step for any business is to view examples of work in order to gauge its quality and style, and the photographer's suitability for the project. Visiting a professional photographer's website to view their portfolio ensures your decision is based on past results, and provides an opportunity to review the types of clients and industries the photographer has worked in.

Preparing a design brief is a vital element in the commissioning process. A good photographer will always insist on a detailed brief to protect companies from wasting valuable time, effort and money on a set of images that are not wanted and effectively worthless. The brief acts as a platform for all parties to refer to, and ensures the project is properly structured.

Furthermore, commissioning photography is not as expensive as you might think. Compared to the average price a design agency will charge to design a simple business logo, hiring a professional to photograph four company executives is half the cost.

Turning your ideas into successful corporate imagery can only be successfully achieved by commissioning a professional photographer. This will ensure your business is perceived in the right light by your customers, your partners and your competitors. With the company reputation at stake, businesses must resist the urge to cut corners with photography – instead, with careful planning and a small investment of time and budget, your imagery will create the right impression the first time, and bolster your company image every time.

And finally – The Web

Many people consider photography for their website to have lesser importance than other media. The "we only need it lo-res for the web" attitude persists.

But have you considered that your website is your global shop window with a potential audience of millions ? Get your web photography wrong and the whole world will know in the click of a mouse . .