

Public Relations



How to Take a Great PR Photo

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The importance of photography to support a PR story cannot be underestimated. In many cases a good photograph can significantly increase the coverage for a strong story, and may even be the deciding factor in whether a weaker story appears in the press or not.

Providing high quality images is critical when it comes to the 'people' photography used to support news stories such as award wins and new franchise signings, as in many cases the press may only want to run a 'photocaption' story. If the picture is poor, or if there is no photograph at all, this clearly is not possible.

Unfortunately, due to the proliferation of digital cameras, the magazines are receiving more and more amateur photographs that fail to meet the standards required in professional publishing. In many cases these cannot be used because of factors ranging from poor composition, insufficient lighting, or the resolution being too low.

Pinnacle understands that, for reasons of timing or budget, it may not always be possible to employ a professional photographer and, as a result, the agency has put together the following simple guidelines to ensure that the photographs its clients produce are good enough to secure editorial coverage. Following these guidelines can significantly improve the chances of obtaining coverage - including the publication of our photographs - in the press.

It should be emphasised, however, that photography is a highly skilled activity involving many factors and there is no substitute for employing a professional. This six step guide is simply intended to maximise the chance of success in the situations where that is not possible.

Six-Step Guide for PR Photography

Step 1: Location, props and composition

In selecting a picture for a magazine page, an editor will seek an eye-catching image; preferably one that differs from others in the publication. When it comes to 'people' shots there is inevitably considerable similarity between them (all feature people in business dress looking straight at the camera). Consequently, choosing an unusual background will immediately make your photograph stand out from others and increase its chance of publication. Try to use a location other than a concrete office building wherever possible! Including interesting props can also help.

If, for some reason, neither of these options is available, taking the photograph from an angle that is not directly 'face on' - for example, from above or below - can differentiate it.



Step 2: The fewer people the better

When a news photograph is published in a magazine it will generally be considerably smaller than the image that is submitted. This occurs due to space constraints and happens irrespective of the content of the picture. If many people are shown, each will be very small, possibly indistinguishable. Limiting the number of people to 2-4 wherever possible will increase the impact of the photograph.

This will also simplify the job of the publication's caption writer who has a very limited number of words to capture what the story is and each extra body shown will reduce this. For the same reason it is better to group people from the same organisation together. For example, staff from company A on the left and those from company B on the right.

Step 3: Provide a Choice of Photographs

Providing a choice allows the agency to offer different pictures to different publications. This could simply be for reasons of exclusivity but can also have a more practical basis. An example here would be where a regional magazine was more interested in using a picture showing a local representative of the organisation.

Step 4: Sufficient Lighting

Always choose as bright as possible a location for the photograph and use additional lighting where available when shooting indoors. Get as close as possible to the subject of the shot; in-built camera flash units are ineffective at more than a few paces away from the subject. Natural light is always a plus, whether shooting indoors or outdoors.

Step 5: Get the resolution right

Select the largest image size and highest resolution available on the camera.

None of the above advice will help if the camera is not set to the correct resolution. Do not assume that because you have a 6-megapixel camera it will always take high-resolution pictures – it can but it may not!

Step 6: Choose your image file type

Always choose the JPEG (.jpg) file format for ease of use and commonality.

Not only is this the most widely accepted image file type but it provides an ideal balance between quality of image and compact file size.

Get your photo out there

Finally, now that you have your photos perfectly posed, shot and saved, you are ready to use or distribute them. It is always import to consider what applications the photos are likely to have, how they will be presented and your method of distribution.

With particularly large images it might be impossible to email them directly to your audience. Using file sharing services such as Dropbox or Google Drive ensures that you can pass over the images in their highest quality, without worrying about the size of the file. If quality is not such a pressing requirement and the image is not going to be used at its full resolution, then resizing or compression might be needed to fit into an inbox!





Need help with taking PR photos?

To find out, contact:

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