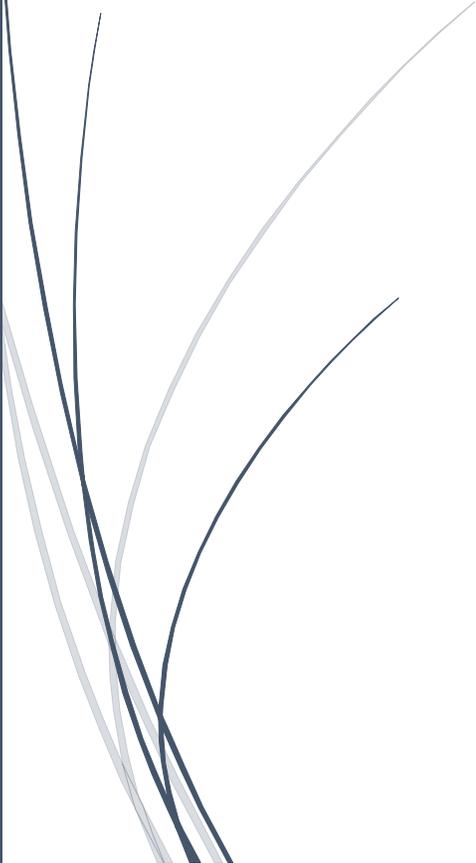


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Small Business Marketing: Making the Most of Your Professional Photos

1. Choosing Images
2. Leveraging Images
3. Image Manipulation
4. Curating Images
5. The Next Chapter

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Vicky Tebbetts, VT Marketing and Communications
FOR COMMUNITY CAPITAL OF VERMONT

Professional photos are a valuable asset for any business. Images that depict you and your employees, your work, and the environment in which you work can say a thousand words. What are some ways to use those images to enhance the visibility of your business?

Choosing Images

Choose your image for your audience. Imagine the person who will be looking at it, how they see or would like to see your product, and where you will put it for them to see (and buy).

- Who are they?
- What do they like to see?
- How do they imagine your product is made?
- What about you makes them want to purchase your product?

For each use, pick an image that talks to the people you want to reach, and shows them what you think they want to see in order to convert them into customers.

Leveraging Images

Places where you may decide to use your images include websites, review sites like Google Business, blog posts, social channels, media outreach, advertisements, printed collateral like brochures, booths or display panels, and your enews.

- You may have a favorite image or set of images that become part of your brand story.
- Similar images may be used in similar outreach vehicles. You may decide to use the same or a similar image on your homepage, in your enews header, on your Facebook cover page, or on LinkedIn.
- When working on media outreach, a great shot of you in your business always helps a journalist make the most of your story.

It's okay – and recommended – to recycle content, including images. Keep track of what images you have used, where, and when.

Image Manipulation

Your high-resolution images can be cropped, filtered, or shrunk for many different uses. Most computers come with Paint as part of the Windows Suite. Some free online photo editors include Lunapic (www.lunapic.com) and Pixlr (www.pixlr.com). Photoshop is a little more advanced.

- Crop your photos to zoom in on one piece of the photo, like in a product placement shot or to create a Facebook cover shot.
- Find the dimensions of cover shots and profile pictures for different social channels for accurate cropping. For instance, Facebook cover and profile dimensions are here: <https://www.facebook.com/help/125379114252045>.
- Resize your photos to use them in a place like a website or on social channels, where resolution can be relatively low and smaller file size is important for loading speed.

- Filter your photos for funky effects, to use on social media (some social channels like Instagram have filter alternatives built in when you upload).
- Change photos to black-and-white for an artistic, hip, or contemporary industrial look.
- Images can be strung together in a slideshow and/or put to music using smartphone apps like imovie – fun for social media and presentations!

IMPORTANT: When editing an image, make sure you put your original image files in a special folder and “save as” (instead of save) when you are saving changes. You want to make sure you can go back to the original file next time when you want to do something new with the image.

Curating Images

Images tell the story of a moment in time. The meaning of your story will likely change over time, but it will always be valuable.

- Consider creating another set of back-up copies on a thumb drive or external storage system.
- To eliminate confusion, organize folders on your drive by use, since each requires different resolution and manipulation of the same photos: for print, web, social, etc.
- Consider getting your images printed and arranging them in a dedicated album, whether you give it to your family, friends, have it at your business, or keep it for yourself.
- For a modest investment, you can create professional-looking online photo books for seamless display with services like Snapfish and Shutterfly.

Keep and care for your images – you never know what the future holds.

The Next Chapter

You have great photos, but only a few and they’re all similar. There will be more occasions for photos. What to look for?

- Aim to tell a story with your images. Here’s are some great tips on narrative photos: <https://digital-photography-school.com/8-tips-storytelling-images/>.
- Pay attention to photo composition, such as lighting and background. For example, a person standing in front of a plant can look like they have a plant growing out of their head in the photo.
- People in photos should be wearing clothing that is consistent with the product and audience, with no words or obvious fashion logos. If you want to be able to use the photos throughout the year, wear seasonally neutral clothing (no bulky sweaters, no tank tops). Choose clothing consistent with your brand (e.g. if you sell outdoor gear, don’t wear a ballgown).
- Smile and include your business activity or product for context.
- If you’re including others in your photos, consider model releases or pitfalls of including kids under 18. Photo permission does not need be complicated, with awareness.
- If someone outside of your business is taking the photos, arrange to own the photos fully and without attribution.