

Guide to hiring or commissioning a professional photographer

White Paper

The need for images in every aspect of life or business remains strong. Photographs do two things: they create a record and they convey a message. When deciding to use an image, your decision will probably be based on whether you believe the image will deliver your message or record your subject / activity better than you could otherwise do, or so you hope. For some, the emphasis is on record, for others the emphasis is on message and sometimes the line is blurred. In your images the message lives forever but the record is historic and this creates a necessity for new.

Finding the balance in a new client / photographer relationship involves communication and interpretation. A good photographer should understand your needs better than you do and this is where the balance comes into play. You may have exact image ideas or you may just have rough ideas. In any case it is likely that quality and value are both high on your list. If you have found a photographer whose skills match your expectations, the hard portion of your work is done. All that remains is clear understanding.

Historically a great deal has changed in the photographic industry, particularly in recent years but from a client perspective the process should be much simpler than in the past. Gone is the need to squint at contact sheets and in comes the gratification of being able to see instant results with the additional potential benefit of being able to manipulate them with relative ease.

The process of commissioning or hiring a photographer:-

- Establish contact with a brief overview of needs
- Photographer asks questions to establish the final outcome and therefore the logistics and resulting expenses.
- Quote
- Meeting - this can involve story boarding for some shoots.
- Shoot preparation (particularly when extra staff, models, props and locations are required)
- The shoot/s
- Postproduction (usually by the photographer)
 - Backup
 - Editing and in some cases keywording
 - Web gallery to view first edit
 - Calibrated colour correction
 - Spotting (removal of dust and spots)
 - Advanced retouching (as agreed)
 - Updated web gallery to see the changes and final edit
 - Resizing (to suit your output)
- Delivery
 - Via an emailed link to a .zip on the photographers website.
 - On data DVD via courier or post
 - Via email
- Feedback – a useful source for refining the relationship
- Invoicing
- Payment

The benefits of hiring an experienced, professional photographer should of course be in the results but it is the process and combination of communication, resource and relaxed application of skill that excellence should be achieved.

The ideal solution for both client and photographer is in a marriage of harmonized talent and necessity.