

Sharpen your marketing focus with digital photos



Photographs add impact. They're one of the best ways to catch a customer's eye, illustrate an idea, or increase the appeal of your business communications. Digital technology now brings professional-quality photos within reach of any size business.

This How-To Guide will demonstrate how easy it is to apply digital technology and offer advice for enhancing your marketing efforts with digital photos.

Understand It – Discover how simple it is to put the power of digital photography to work for your business.

Plan It – Examine the many ways you can use digital photography to create polished and professional communications without a large budget.

Do It – Learn how to select the right camera, printer, scanner, and supplies for your digital photography needs.

Use It – See how one small start-up used digital images to hit the ground running.



Buy It – Shop for the products that bring the power of photos to your business.

Understand It

Ever since the invention of the camera, photographs have helped businesses showcase their products and services, make a professional impression, and set themselves apart from their competition. Businesses realized early on that photos add pizzazz and considerably enhance the effectiveness of marketing messages.

Until recently, however, harnessing the power of photos usually required a sizable budget, the services of outside professionals, and significant production time. Now, digital photography technology—digital cameras, scanners, high-resolution printers, and professional papers—puts photo-rich marketing materials within reach of even modest budgets.

Get noticed

Photos grab your attention. Think about it: When you flip open a magazine, what do you notice first, the text of an article or its color photo? The photo of course. And studies have revealed that our eyes are naturally drawn to

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Once you become familiar with digital imaging technology, you'll realize how easy it is to add eye-catching photos to brochures, websites, presentations, press releases, and direct mail pieces—anything you want customers to notice, read, and respond to.

Fast and Flexible

Digital imaging lets you quickly add photos to almost any form of business communication. Let's say, for example, that you're a real estate agent with a new listing. You can create an attention-getting flyer—complete with photos of the home—in a few fast steps:

1. Shoot photos with a digital camera.
2. Plug the camera into a PC and load the images.
3. Select the best photos and place them in a flyer layout with your text.
4. Print the flyer on a high-quality printer.

Just like that, you can have professional-looking flyers without enlisting the services of a photographer, marketing firm, or print shop. And you don't have to wait for film processing or print runs. In addition, once you have digital photos that you like, you can use those same images in a wide range of messages. Various software tools let you edit and resize photos to fit the requirements of different formats. So with a little practice, you'll see how easy it is to include customized photos in your website, ads, newsletter, and other communications.

Experiment and Save Money

As almost any professional photographer will tell you, the key to getting a great picture is to experiment and take lots of shots. With digital photography, you can shoot away without worrying about wasting film because there

is no film. And there's no waiting for pictures, either. Digital cameras let you preview shots immediately so you can keep the good ones and discard the rest.

Besides saving you money on film and processing costs, today's photo-quality inkjet and laser printers allow you to create as many, or as few, copies of a piece as you need. By printing a few brochures at a time only when you need them, you eliminate the costs of printing and storing thousands of copies. Plus, you can easily update materials to make sure you're always presenting the most timely and relevant information.

Plan It

A key way to save money while standing out from the competition is to create professional-quality presentations, brochures, websites, or other marketing materials in-house. Digital cameras, scanners, and printers make it easier than ever to add visual punch to your communications.

By creatively applying photographs, you can add to the appeal and impact of practically any message. Examine the many ways you communicate, and consider how digital imaging can enhance their effectiveness.

Show to Tell

A picture can indeed be worth a thousand words. Imagine how many we could have used to explain the example at right. A few well-chosen photos can get a point across instantly.

Showcase your Offerings

Photographs are the best way to show customers your products, services, or completed projects. If customers can see from your portfolio, catalog, website, or other materials that you offer the very thing they're looking for, they're more likely to do business with you.

Personal Touch

Literally showing who you are can make all the difference to potential customers. People often like to see whom they're doing business with, and in an e-commerce world, face-to-face contact is less and less common. Put your face on your brochures, website, even your business cards, and make a truly personal connection.

Photographs also give you an opportunity to stand out from your competition by letting you present the right image of yourself and your business. Rather than leaving things up to your customers' imaginations, use photos—on your website, brochures, or phonebook ad—to show them that you are, for example, a professional-looking financial planner in a well-organized office. By immediately giving customers a favorable impression, you make it more likely that they will choose to do business with you.

Customize

Customers see dozens of one-size-fits-all brochures, proposals, and presentations. Digital technology lets you customize materials so they speak directly to a particular person. Apply a little creative photo work to your proposals and you'll stand out from the crowd. A house-painting service, for example, could tweak a digital photo to show a potential client how great their house would look with a fresh coat of paint.

Multiple Options

One of the greatest benefits of digital photography is the ability to reuse a photo in a number of formats. You can use the same digital images in your marketing materials, your website, your newsletter or any other type of communication. Reusing images saves you time and money, and gives all your marketing efforts a uniform look.

Each medium—the Web, newspapers, glossy brochures, etc.—has different image requirements. For example, a typical Web photo is a 72-dpi JPEG image, while a 600-dpi TIFF file would be better suited for a glossy brochure. Photo software helps you optimize digital photos for different formats. Intuitive software, such as the HP Photo and Imaging Software (included with all HP digital cameras), allows you to quickly crop and resize photos, change file compression types, adjust resolution and lightness, and even remove red-eye.

Professional photo-editing software, such as Adobe Photoshop, gives you these capabilities plus a host of more sophisticated photo-manipulation tools. Many Photoshop books, tutorials, and classes are available to teach you how to tweak photos like a pro.

Sales and Marketing

People have notoriously short attention spans for marketing messages and sales pitches. Make the most of the few seconds you have by using pictures in your brochures,

sales materials, presentations, and proposals to show the reader exactly what you offer. Photos get your message across much faster than text and draw people in so they want to learn more.

Advertising

Whether it's direct mail, in a magazine, or in the phone-book, the biggest hurdle an ad faces is getting noticed. A great photo cuts through the clutter of competing ads and draws the customer's eye—especially when it's coupled with a compelling headline and dynamite copy.

Whether you hire professional designers and copywriters, have the publication create the ads for you, or do it yourself, the perfect digital photograph can help ensure that you wind up with an attention-getting ad. And by taking that photo yourself, you can be certain you get just the shot you want without the cost of a professional photographer or stock photo fees.

Newsletters

A newsletter is an excellent, low-cost way to get your message out to customers. It gives you a forum to demonstrate your industry expertise, while providing readers with information about your products, services, and promotions.

A bike shop, for example, might send out a newsletter that showcases the latest bikes, gives maintenance tips, and profiles a different mountain-bike trail each month. In every section, photos would add to the impact and effectiveness by showing readers exactly what they mean. Other possible items for your newsletter include photo-rich customer profiles and testimonials, pictures and stories about the latest trade events you've attended, and reprints of press clippings about your business.

Remember, with digital images, you're not confined to the printed page. E-mail newsletters are another outstanding

method for reaching out to customers. Digital photography makes it easy to add visual appeal. Plus, by avoiding printing and postage expenses, e-newsletters are among the least expensive ways to promote your business.

Internal communications

In addition to their marketing power, digital images can also help communication and productivity within the workplace. Use your camera for competitive research:

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Take pictures of competitors' products, ads, and merchandizing efforts so you can quickly and easily share this information with co-workers through e-mail or in a printed report.

Or take a picture of meeting notes on the whiteboard and distribute copies (or post the image on the company intranet), rather than having people take notes. Speed up finding items in storage with photos taped to the outsides of boxes showing their contents. Use your imagination. You're bound to come up with dozens of ways that digital images can save time, reduce confusion, and improve communication in the workplace.

Do It

Once you've determined the areas where photographs can enhance your business communications, the next step is to choose the digital camera, scanner, printer, and papers that will help you get the most out of digital photography.

Resolution

The most important digital-photography concept to understand is resolution. It will likely be the most influential factor for your buying decisions.

Digital photos are composed of hundreds of thousands of dots called pixels. The higher the resolution of an image, the more pixels it contains and the more detailed it is. When you enlarge a low-resolution image, it can become blurry and distorted as individual pixels begin to show. High-resolution images are better suited for enlarging or zooming in on particular details.

Digital cameras refer to resolution in megapixels. A camera with 3-megapixel resolution captures 3 million pixels in an image, and a 1-megapixel camera takes the same photo with only 1 million pixels. Meanwhile, scanners and printers

express resolution in terms of dots per inch (dpi) or pixels per inch (ppi). Comparing dpi and megapixels can be confusing, but this example may help: A 4 x 6-inch photo at 300 dpi (or ppi) measures 1200 x 1800 pixels, which in turn equals 2.16 megapixels.

Digital Cameras

Knowing how you plan to use digital photos is the key to determining the resolution and other digital camera features you'll need. For example, if you only plan to take simple snapshots or use images on the Web, an entry-level camera with slightly more than 1-megapixel resolution may be adequate.

A 2-megapixel camera will take decent photos. However, if your plans involve using pro-quality images in printed materials such as brochures, or if you want the flexibility to use an image in a wide variety of formats, you'll appreciate a camera with greater than 3-megapixel resolution. And if enlargements such as 8 x 10 photos are in your future, you should probably use a camera with 4-megapixel resolution or higher.

If you'll be taking photos from a distance or snapping detailed close-ups, you'll need a camera with good (3x or better) optical zoom capabilities. Optical zoom is the amount the camera lens can magnify an image—just like on a traditional camera. A host of other features, such as automatic and manual controls, video mode, digital zoom, LCD display size, memory type and size, connections, and PC compatibility, will also probably influence your buying decisions.

Ease of use is another major factor to consider in selecting the right camera for your business. After all, what good are all those special features if you can't figure out how to get your camera to do them? Check out the controls, feel, and complexity of several cameras before you buy. Some cameras only make sense to the engineers who built them; and others, like HP Photosmart cameras, have controls and menus designed to be simpler and more intuitive to users.

As you might expect, the greater the resolution, zoom, and number of added features a digital camera has, the higher its cost. But if your budget allows, you probably won't regret buying a camera with abilities and features that are beyond your bare-minimum requirements. Greater capabilities let you use your camera in a wider variety of situations, and they also give you the flexibility of working with higher-quality images. Plus, a camera you can grow with sets you up to discover new ways for using digital images in your business.

Scanners

Digital scanners let you quickly and easily turn printed photos, slides, and even negatives into pro-quality digital images. Choosing a scanner is similar to selecting a

digital camera. Once you know how you want to use your images, your primary concern is optical resolution—followed in this case by bit depth.

A resolution of 300–600 dpi is adequate for images displayed on the Web, but photos that will be enlarged or that will wind up in printed materials will benefit from a scanner with 1200-dpi (or higher) resolution.

Bit depth refers to the amount of color information the scanner captures within each dot. Higher bit depth means more color gradations will be visible, and the scan will be more true to the original. A 24-bit scanner is suitable for most uses, while 36-bit depth or higher is recommended if you want to print your images as pro-quality photos, or if you'll be scanning images from slides or negatives.

As with digital cameras, the features and capabilities of scanners vary widely. Factors like speed, ease of use, in-box software, and accessories such as document feeders and film scanners should all be considered.

Printers

Unless all of your digital images are going on the Web, you'll need a high-resolution printer to output your materials. A printer with at least 600-dpi resolution is suitable for printing most marketing materials, but for pro-quality photos, a printer with 1200 dpi or higher is optimal.

With inkjet printers, you should look beyond resolution and consider such factors as color layering, speed, and other features. HP's color layering technology—PhotoREt IV—provides a broad range of smooth and realistic colors by precisely blending multiple drops of ink within an image pixel. It delivers lifelike skin tones, smooth color transitions, and extremely sharp image clarity for true photo-quality printing. And several HP photo printers also have smart features such as automatic paper-type sensing (no more printing at the wrong paper settings) and slots

that allow you to print directly from your camera's Smart-Media, CompactFlash, or Memory Stick removable memory.

Paper

Make sure the full impact of your digital photos shows in the end. Print on high-quality papers that take advantage of your printer's ability to produce professional images. From presentations to matte and glossy photos to everyday correspondence, specialized professional papers give your materials a polished look and feel. For example, HP Photosmart printers are optimized to print outstanding 4800 x 1200-dpi images on HP Premium Plus Photo Paper. And HP Brochure and Flyer Paper is ideal for creating vibrant, pro-quality brochures on an HP Deskjet printer, Photosmart photo printer, or Officejet all-in-one.

While they each work great on their own, when you bring HP cameras, scanners, printers, papers, and ink together, the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts. HP digital photography products are designed and engineered to work together to produce incredible results.

For example, you could:

1. Snap pictures with your HP Photosmart camera.
2. Insert the camera's Smart Media card into the slot on an HP Photosmart printer, or plug the camera's USB cable directly into the printer.
3. Print your photos on HP Premium Plus Photo Paper using HP PhotoREt IV and HP ink. No PC required.

Just like that, you have beautiful, vibrant photographs in minutes. But that's not all! As a result of years of HP research on printer, ink, and paper technology, these photos will resist fading for many years to come.

Once they had all the image files in digital format, it was easy for them to edit the files into a uniform size, look, and feel. They printed out the images on their photo printer in high-quality color, mounted them on boards, and voila: They had a highly professional portfolio that clearly demonstrated their unique style and expertise.

In addition, now that the trio had examples of their work in digital format, they could use these same images in their marketing efforts. Now, many of these same pictures also grace the pages of their website and marketing brochure.

And rather than have a print shop run off hundreds of brochures, they print a few professional-quality copies at a time using their photo printer and HP Brochure and Flyer Paper. This saves them money and allows them to update the brochures to showcase their latest and greatest work.

Use It

Leaving the relative security of a large company to start your own business can be a daunting prospect. But as the three founders of Landscape Partners found, the thoughtful application of digital imaging technology can help jump-start a start-up with a polished and professional image.

Changing Landscapes

The three founding landscape architects created Landscape Partners so they could pursue their own vision for designing outdoor environments. Initially, however, they faced two hurdles familiar to many start-ups: They needed to present the image to potential clients that, despite being a brand-new firm, they were, in fact, highly skilled and professional landscape architects. And, of course, they had limited funds to do this with.

The first thing they created was a portfolio of their work. But their work samples existed in several different formats:

- Photos of projects they had each worked on for past employers
- Existing parks, playgrounds, gardens, and other sites they had designed but neglected to photograph
- Designs and sketches on paper
- Designs created on the computer
- Scale models

To have any hope of impressing a client, their portfolio needed a uniform, professional format that was easy to transport and present. They created just that—and much faster, cheaper, and more easily than they expected—using digital imaging technology. First they scanned the photographs, sketches, and designs into high-resolution digital form using their scanner. Then they used a digital camera to shoot pictures of their real-world projects and models.

Images at Work

On their first major project, Landscape Partners used digital photography to help them at every stage—from analysis through proposal through completion.

They were asked to submit a proposal for creating a garden and recreation area at a new retirement community. Before starting any designs, however, all three architects spent an entire day at the site, examining every detail. They took dozens of digital photographs, recording everything from the slope of a hill to the subtle effects of sunlight at different times of day. Their photographic analysis helped them plan and design everything from a gently winding path that would help elderly residents navigate a hill to the best location for a bench to watch the sunset.

In creating their proposal, the Landscape Partners placed these digital photos alongside sketches of their designs. They also included photos of the particular elements—such as a fountain, benches, and various plants and shrubs—they proposed. The digital images helped make their vision immediately apparent to the client. Their competitors didn't stand a chance.

Once the project had begun, digital images posted on private pages of Landscape Partners' website kept the client up to date on the team's progress. And digital photos e-mailed to the client helped them get speedy approval on various elements.

The results: They finished ahead of schedule, the client was extremely pleased, and Landscape Partners put themselves on the map with a major success.

But they haven't stopped there. Upon completion of the project, they took numerous pictures of the recreation area, the garden, and its details. Their digital cameras let them experiment with a number of angles and various types of light, resulting in some stunning additions to their portfolio, website, and other marketing materials.

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