

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS FOR PRESS RELEASES

To make free publicity or editorials more attractive and at the same time maximize the chances of publication in a trade magazine, it is of the highest importance to have a good set of digital photographs available. Submitted press releases without quality photographs are not being considered anymore and put aside immediately.

In the first place, the chosen photographs should have a direct relation to the subject of your press release. Important is that your picture concentrates on the main topic of your press release and supports your written text visually. It must convey the same message, your biggest benefit, advantage or other features. The main criterion is to give a positive answer to the question: Do these pictures tell the right story about my company?

Our suggestion is to make details where you can, as these very often tell more in particular about your abilities than the overall pictures. More important is that they are mostly more appealing to editors and readers. However, the most important is to attract attention either via recognition or because it arouses interest through being puzzled. Do not forget that nowadays magazines are being briefly scanned at most and you want readers to stop and read while they are scanning.

The digital photographs to be **published in print** need to comply with a number of prerequisites:

These pictures need a specific resolution (detail) in order to be usable by the publisher. This resolution is measured in dpi, (Dots per Inch) and can be set on the camera (e.g. high quality, medium quality or low quality, or the exact number: 800x600 – 2400x1800). The better quality the camera, the higher resolution can be used. Therefore, one of the quality indicators for digital cameras is the total number of pixels (dots, or image elements) the camera can record in the picture. The higher the number is the better the detail in the picture.

For printed material **high resolutions** within 300 – 600 dpi are used and the dimensions of the photograph are preferably approx 2800x2000 pixels. Please note that when your picture is only 300 pixels wide and 200 pixels high, the “blowing up” of this picture in a photo editing tool to e.g. 600x400 pixels will result in a much lower quality picture. The photo editor cannot add detail to the original picture; therefore the enlarged picture will lack a lot of detail. Hence, the golden rule is: you can always make the picture smaller, but never bigger (without losing quality). The “raw” pictures from the camera should be checked and/or modified for optimum results (brightness, colour, contrast etc) by a professional and should be fit for direct use.

The file sizes of the pictures in the camera may vary from 2-3 MB to 20, 30 MB or even bigger, depending on the settings of your camera and the type of your camera. After transferring the pictures from the camera to the computer and your image program / photo editor, you need to decide in what file format to store these pictures. Commonly used photo file formats are: PSD, TIFF or JPG (uncompressed).

PSD is the format of the digital imaging software Photoshop. This is the preferred software to scan, modify and/or design high quality images for many companies that create the magazines. The TIFF and JPG are industry standard files formats that are used to interchange files between software applications.

The main goal here is not to loose quality (pixels) in this storage step; therefore do not compress the file to a smaller size, as you will loose detail. It is better to let the publisher size these pictures to his requirements for his magazine. Depending on the photo editor / image program you use, you can make a choice between these formats. It is a good suggestion to store your pictures in more than one file format, e.g. mypicture.psd and at the same time mypicture.pdf. If necessary, you are able to provide the particular picture in requested format.

Depending on the file size of your picture, you either email them to the publisher or burn them on a CD-Rom and send them via surface mail. It is custom not to send files bigger than 2 MB per email as attachments, as this may result in different complications if the Internet infrastructure is less strong.

To sum up, these are the main points to be followed:

- Colour photographs are to be used preferably
- A photo should have a resolution of at least 300dpi
- The preferred formats are JPG, PSD and TIFF
- The photographs should be modified for optimum brightness, colour, contrast, etc
- Make sure there are no defects and the picture(s) is/are in a good condition
- No shadows
- To preserve sufficient quality, white background is advised to be used
- If taking the photograph yourself, avoid flash light and use existing light instead – the sensitivity of your camera can be regulated up to 1600 ASA. In the case the use of artificial light is impossible to prevent, it is better to set the colour temperature in your camera to artificial light
- Always remember that the individual files sent by e-mail should not exceed 2 MB at the time

For additional information on the subject of digital photographs, have a look at the websites below:

<http://www.cambridgeincolour.com/tutorials.htm>

<http://aboutpublicrelations.net/ucapps-1.htm>

<http://www.digital-photography-tips.net/>

<http://www.geofflawrence.com/>

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