Step-By-Step Photography Guide

HOW TO GET THE BEST WEBSITE PICTURES

+Shot List

Grassroots
CREATIVE CO.

Contents

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Intro

WHY PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY MATTERS

Strong photography is a key component of web design, and I strongly encourage clients to work with a professional photographer to capture what they do. Pictures that showcase their business, team, and products make a website much more engaging and authentic—plus, they're great for things like background images and storytelling elements.

📖 Websites are like picture books: we have to show AND tell people what you do. Your website needs a balance of captivating visuals to illustrate your story, paired with compelling text that explains who you are, who you serve, how you can help, and how you work. **What type of story are you telling with your website?**

Sidenote: Stock images, while convenient, lack authenticity and should be avoided.

Step 1

ALIGN YOUR PICTURES WITH YOUR BRAND

Design matters! Your brand is the visual representation of your business's unique identity. It is made up of your logo, colors, design elements (graphics, print, and web), and the voice or persona conveyed through your text. A strong brand is carefully crafted and consistently applied across all your marketing materials. Your website pictures should align with your brand, helping to create a cohesive, professional look throughout all your marketing efforts.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR PHOTOS ON-BRAND

Pull-In Brand Colors

Use your brand colors in outfits, props, and background elements to create visual consistency.

Reflect Your Style

Decide what look you'd like: bright and airy, moody and bold. Communicate your vision clearly to your photographer.

Consistency is Key

Ensure the style of your photos aligns with other visual elements of your brand, including your logo, website, and marketing.

Showcase Authenticity

Feature real moments, products, and people from your business to build trust and connection with your audience.

Sidenote: Want to learn more about branding and website design? Visit my website for resources, blog posts, and details on my branding packages: www.grassrootscreative.co

Step 2

GO WITH A PRO: CHOOSING A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Investing in professional photography is one of the best decisions you can make for your website AND marketing efforts. Ideally, working with a brand photographer who understands how to capture your business's unique identity will take your visuals to the next level. However, if a brand photographer isn't within reach, hiring a professional photographer is still a great choice. High-quality photos are versatile, elevating your website, social media, advertisements, and printed materials. They help create a consistent, professional look that speaks to your audience and reinforces your brand.

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PHOTOGRAPHER

1. Search for Brand Photographers. If possible, look for a photographer who specializes in brand photography, as they understand how to capture images that truly represent your business. Try searching for brand, branding, business, or small business photographers in your area. If you can't find one, don't worry—a professional photographer can still deliver great results. Just be sure to use this guide to plan, prepare, and communicate your vision. **Give them the shot list and let them know exactly what you want to focus on.**

2. Set Your Budget. Photographers come at various price points, so it's important to find one within your budget. Be sure their work aligns with your quality expectations. Inquire if they offer packages or a set number of photos for a fixed price. If you have a limited budget, consider a mini-session, which provides fewer images at a reduced cost.

3. View Their Portfolio. Take a look at their website and social media to ensure their work resonates with your aesthetic and shows consistent quality.

4. Communicate Style and Vibe. Be clear about the style and vibe you're looking for in your photos. Do you want bright, airy images or moody, bold shots? Clear communication helps ensure your vision comes to life.

5. Interview and Build Rapport. Meet and chat with them for an informal interview to see if you mesh well. Feeling comfortable with your photographer is critical because it shows in your photos. Discuss where the shoot will take place—your business location is ideal, but a studio is an excellent option if you prefer to keep your home office private.

6. Check the Contract. Carefully review the contract to ensure you'll receive high-resolution files for use across all your marketing channels. Pay close attention to image usage rights and any restrictive terms. While giving a photographer an occasional social media shoutout is a nice gesture, you don't want to be required to credit them every time you use a photo. A simple credit in the footer of your website is a great way to acknowledge their work—this is often more than enough, and most photographers are happy with this placement.

7. SUPER IMPORTANT: PLAN FOR TIMING. Reach out to the photographer as early as possible to ensure you have the final images BEFORE your website project begins. Factor in time for consultations, the shoot itself, and post-production edits, which can take weeks or even months, depending on the photographer's schedule.

5

Pro Tip

If you're located in NE or Central Ohio, I recommend working with one of the following photographers. Each of them has experience working with brands and businesses to create custom imagery that aligns with your vision, AND they are kind and reliable. Be sure to review their portfolios and schedule a consultation to find the best fit for your needs.

JENNIFER CHRISTINE PHOTOGRAPHY

Jenn is a lifestyle photographer from the westside of Cleveland that captures each person in their own authentic way. She took the photos on my website and I enjoy the bold style that really pulled the space and my brand together. Jenn is super patient, kind, and made me feel comfortable and confident in front of the camera. | See Her Work & Reach Out

YOGI SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

Dilshad is a talented natural light photographer based south of Cleveland, specializing in personal brand photography. Her style is classic, elegant, and inspired by coastal and European aesthetics. As a strong supporter of women in business, she goes beyond capturing beautiful images—she helps female entrepreneurs showcase their brand with confidence and professionalism. Her detailed and organized process ensures a seamless experience from start to finish. | See Her Work & Reach Out

COZY COTTAGE PHOTOGRAPHY

Tracy from Cozy Cottage Photography in Columbus specializes in personal branding sessions that beautifully capture you—your personality, passion, and brand. Her bespoke approach ensures every image tells your unique story, helping you connect authentically with your audience. | See Her Work & Reach Out

Step 3

Once you've found the right photographer, focus on pictures that tell your brand story and enhance your website.

10 KEY PHOTOS EVERY WEBSITE SHOULD HAVE

1. Headshots & Singles. As the founder and leader of your business, professional headshots and single pictures of you are non-negotiable. These photos are perfect for your homepage and "My Story" sections, where potential clients want to see the person behind the brand.

2. Team Photos & Employee Headshots. Showcasing the people behind your business builds trust and makes your brand feel approachable. I like using a group photo on the homepage and individual headshots on your "About" or "Meet the Team" page.

3. Candid Moments. Authenticity matters, show off your personality by capturing shots of you and your team working or interacting with clients. These pictures make your website feel relatable and genuine.

4. Products or Services. Spotlight your products and services with clean, quality pictures that show what you're offering and how it can help customers. Illustrate what it is and how it can be used; this draws people into your world.

5. Detail Shots. Close-ups of tools, products, or elements that you use can define your brand and add depth and character. These photos work beautifully as banner backgrounds or supporting visuals throughout your site.

6. Environmental Shots. Photos of your workspace or location create authenticity and help clients connect with your business. Highlight your most inviting spaces, from light-filled studios to a cozy office or an outdoor area.

7. Action Shots of You Working. Capture your work process, moments of you performing services or interacting with clients, from start to finish. These shots tell a story and showcase the actual work you do. For online businesses that don't have a space, this may look like someone scheduling a consultation or a video chat with you working with a client.

8. Exterior Shots of Your Store or Building. Show off your physical location to help visitors recognize your business. Exterior shots are especially helpful for local SEO and make it easy for clients to find you. I like including these on a contact page, especially in busy areas where parking is challenging.

9. Client Testimonials or Success Stories. Client success is one of the best ways to build trust. Feature portraits or before-and-after photos (with permission) to highlight the impact of your services and create social proof.

10. Office Space Photos. Showcase your workspace, such as waiting areas, treatment rooms, or other spaces. If they can visualize this ahead of time, it makes them comfortable in the space and with you.

Sidenote: Including an exterior image of your business on the Contact page of your website helps visitors recognize your location while showcasing your physical presence. It also enhances wayfinding, making it simpler for customers to find and visit you.

Pro Tip

LEVEL UP WITH VIDEO

Ask your photographer if they could take a few short videos of you working or of you in your element interacting with customers. Using short 30-second clips for backgrounds and dynamic banner content is a level up for your website. Videos of you in action visually demonstrate your expertise and personality while adding a modern touch to your business site.

Step 4

UNDERSTAND WEBSITE IMAGE PLACEMENT

To fully utilize your photos, it's important to understand how different types of pictures are used as images and where they are placed across a website.

1 **Hero Images.** Heros are the large, eye-catching photos featured at the top of your website pages, usually above the fold or the top half (within the first scroll) of a page. You'll see these commonly used on homepages most. Hero images create a strong first impression and set the tone for your brand.

2 **Banner Images.** Banners are wider photos often placed at the top or between different website sections. They help break up text and keep things visually engaging. They are my go-to for adding a filter and laying impactful text on top with a strong call to action (CTA) button.

3 **Carousels.** Carousels are displays that rotate like a carousel and consist of multiple images, graphics, or text. They're great for highlighting different services, projects, testimonials, or team members without taking up too much space.

4 **Photo Galleries.** Galleries are curated collections of images and are most commonly used to display Instagram feeds, as shown below, but they can also be used to showcase portfolios, highlight multiple products, or present different projects in one cohesive section on your website.
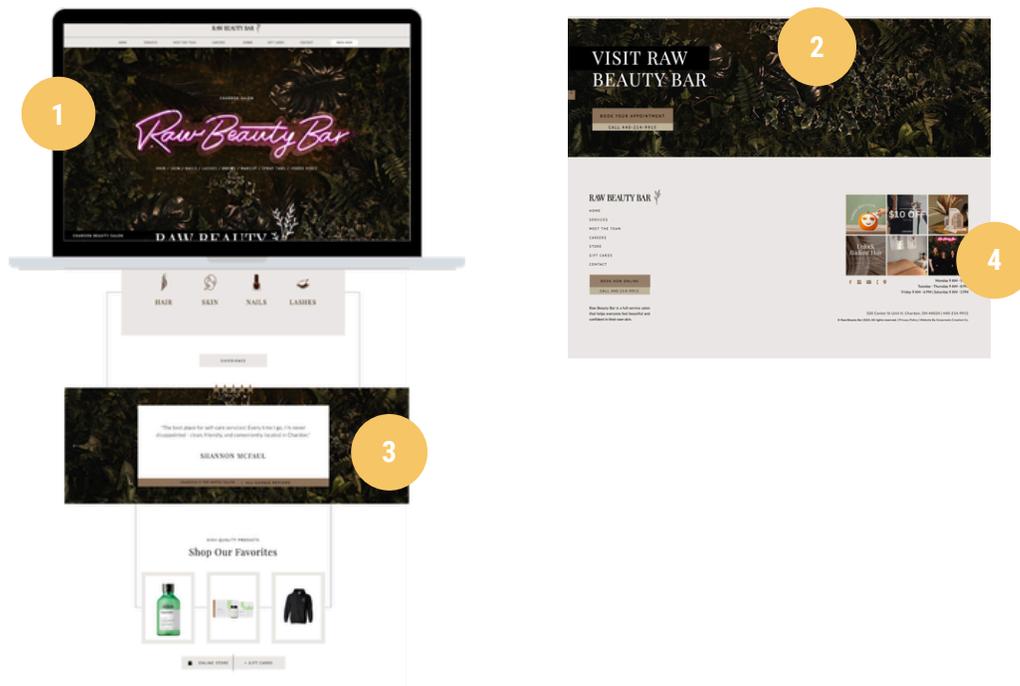
Step 5

PREPARE FOR YOUR PHOTO SHOOT

HOW TO GET READY: FROM WHAT TO WEAR TO STAGING

🧥 Outfit Recommendations

- Dress in your brand colors or similar tones to create consistency.
- For a longer shelf-life, piece together at least 3-4 outfits so your pictures appear to be taken over several days, not just in one.
- Larger patterns photograph well but avoid overly busy details.
- Softer, pastel colors and earthy tones look great and avoid color reflections.
- Choose outfits that balance professional and approachable—structured tops or blazers are great options.
- Above all, make sure you're comfortable; discomfort will show in your photos.

🍃 Props to Bring

- Meaningful props (tools of your trade, personal touches, etc.).
- Brand-relevant items like planners, journals, or your computer.
- Fresh flowers and simple décor.

💡 Prep Your Space & Your People

- Tidy up your work area.
- Stage all the spaces you want to be photographed.
- Make sure your team knows when pictures are happening and are ready to have their picture taken the day of. Have them wear any branded shirts or uniforms (if they typically wear them); otherwise, have them dress in professional clothing.
- If you want to stage working with clients, be sure to have people there standing in if actual clients aren't comfortable having their picture taken.

BONUS

SHOT LIST FOR THE BEST WEBSITE PICTURES

👥 Team & People Photos

- [ ] Individual headshots of each team member (neutral background or in their workspace)
- [ ] Group team photo (posed and candid options)
- [ ] Action shots of you working (consulting, creating, assisting clients, using tools of your trade)
- [ ] Friendly, candid interactions with clients (if applicable and with permission)
- [ ] Hands-on detail shots (e.g., writing, typing, using a product, demonstrating a service)

🏬 Office & Location Shots

- [ ] Exterior shot of your building/storefront (straight-on and angled perspectives)
- [ ] Signage (close-up and wide shot of any outdoor or indoor business signs)
- [ ] Office interior (lobby, waiting area, treatment rooms, workspace, or studio)
- [ ] Desk or workstation setup (styled and in-use)
- [ ] Detail shots of branded elements (e.g., logo on a wall, business cards, packaging)

🏅 Product & Service Pictures

- [ ] Your product(s) on a clean, simple background
- [ ] Products in use (lifestyle shots showing them in action)
- [ ] Service-based action shots (you or your team working with a client, performing a treatment, leading a session or creating something)
- [ ] Flat lay or styled shots featuring tools of your trade

💻 Website-Specific Photos (For banners, hero images, and galleries.)

- [ ] Hero Image Options: Wide, horizontal shots with ample negative space for text overlay
- [ ] Banner Image Options: Similar to hero images but can include more movement or action
- [ ] Image Carousel Options: A variety of shots in different settings to rotate through
- [ ] Photo Gallery Images: A mix of posed, candid, and detail shots to showcase your brand visually

🎬 Bonus: Video Requests (If your photographer offers video services)

- [ ] Short, 30-second clips of you working
- [ ] Clips of product use or service demonstrations
- [ ] Panoramic sweep of your workspace or store
- [ ] Slow-motion shots of hands-on work or customer interactions

To Recap

Let your website shine with imagery that truly reflects your brand, tells your story, and connects with your audience. By following this guide and using the shot list, you'll be ready to secure the perfect pictures that enhance your marketing presence.

High-quality photography goes beyond building a website—it helps create meaningful online experiences. Your clients should see themselves in your business, feel connected to your story, and trust your expertise. **You deserve the best pictures for your website—invest in professional photography, plan your shots with intention, and watch your website come to life as it deeply connects with your audience.**

READY TO GROW A WEBSITE?

Need help creating a website that authentically represents your brand and supports your business long after it's live? I'd love to help you design a site that not only reflects your vision but also provides ongoing support to keep it updated, optimized, and aligned with your evolving goals. Learn more about my packages and process here: **www.grassrootscreative.co**. When you're ready, use the New Client Form to get started!

Your partner in web design,

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