

Working with photographers

AOP

This basic guide from the Association of Photographers reveals good photographic practice

The Association of Photographers is a professional association with more than 1800 members working in commercial photography around the world. The AOP brings professional photographers together, protecting their rights and promoting photography. They campaign for all photographers and their awards promote the best in photography. They also provide information services, education programmes, exhibitions and publications to support these activities. As image-makers respond to globalisation, the AOP is building an effective network of communications with photographers from around the world. www.aop.org.uk

Why use a professional photographer?

As cameras grow in digital sophistication it is becoming easier for everyone to get pleasing results for apparently little cost. However, using an amateur to take an important picture can be a false economy. The impact a professionally taken image has on a client's market is far stronger than that of a quickly grabbed snap from a digital camera.

A professional understands how to capture images that are right for a client's business and convey the message required. Their experience enables them to obtain successful results in any situation. As a proportion of your budget, the cost of getting the original imagery as good as it can be is tiny.

When commissioning a photographer the images they produce will be exclusive to you.

Images bought from a photographic library will only be exclusive for the specific area you have bought a licence for. Unless you negotiate an exclusive deal with the library other companies will be able to licence the same image and use it for their own products or company. Negotiating exclusivity with a library is often more expensive than commissioning a photographer.

How to find the right photographer

Not every professional photographer can do every type of photography. Professional photographers nearly all have websites so putting your requirements into a search engine will give you access to their sites and allow you to see their style and area of photography before you contact them. Their website is an ideal first stop but every experienced photographer will have a portfolio to demonstrate their work, this is their main representation and shows their skills and experience in a proven package. We strongly suggest you ask the photographer to bring in their portfolio so you can see the quality of the images in an enlarged form as well as meeting them. A good relationship with the photographer is very important for both you and your business. (www.image-folio.com)

How do photographers charge?

There are no set rates in commercial photography. The majority of commercial photographers will charge a day rate. Some may charge by the hour. The type of commission and specialisation will generally dictate the fee – photographers will also take into account a number of

other factors to determine the cost including:

- Where the work is to be used e.g. on packaging, billboards, national press, website
- The length of time the work is to be used by you
- The territory or territories in which the work is to be used

Discuss tight budgets with your photographer who can advise if the project is realistic and what you can expect for your proposed budget.



iStockphoto.com / Sugarfree



Be aware that if other professionals are needed these will be charged on top of the photographer's fee, as will film and processing or digital capture. The photographer should estimate these extra costs for you. There is a misconception that if the images are shot digitally, rather than on film, this is a cheaper way of producing images. Some photographers will still shoot on film but deliver the images in a digital form while others will shoot and deliver digitally. Both methods incur costs. In order to produce high quality digital images a lot of time and skill is necessary after the shoot, in preparing the images for presentation to the client and ultimately for reproduction.

Why don't I get the right to use the images wherever I want?

It is rare for a client to insist on unlimited use of the images they have commissioned, as this can be a costly affair. The price of the job includes the agreed media – an unrestricted licence would include every possible media including billboards, videos, TV, CD's, t-shirts etc – worldwide for the term of copyright, which is 70 years after the photographer dies. The price for this type of licence would be enormous and you would be paying for use you do not need. To be fair to the client and ensure they get the rights they need, a system has been agreed with commissioners for negotiating licences.

Go to http://c4c.the-aop.org/pdfs/Licensing_Guidelines.pdf for AOP guidelines on negotiating licences

USEFUL LINKS

AOP Image Folio
<http://home.the-aop.org/Portfolios>
A collection of AOP members' portfolios

Beyond the Lens
www.beyond-the-lens.com/
In-depth information on the laws surrounding photography, ethics, standards of practice, different types of photography etc

DACS (Designers & Artists Copyright Society)
www.dacs.org.uk/
The Copyright Collecting Society for the Visual Arts

The Association of Photographers
<http://home.the-aop.org/>
An extremely useful resource for all photographers and users of photography

The Intellectual Property Office
www.ipo.gov.uk/
Responsible for Intellectual Property (copyright, designs, patents and Trade Marks) in the UK

What if I want to use it for things I don't have a licence for?

Should the commissioned work exceed your expectations and you wish to extend the use of the images then you can easily negotiate this with the photographer. Suggested guidelines as to how photographers may charge for extra usage has been negotiated with commissioners of photography and is available to download here. All photographers will negotiate extra use, whether they use our suggested guidelines or have a price list of their own.

Go to http://c4c.the-aop.org/pdfs/Re-usage_Guidelines.pdf for AOP re-usage guidelines

If I've paid for the film, processing or digital files why can't I keep all the work?

If you buy a copy of a book, computer software or a CD, making that purchase doesn't give you the rights

to make copies of it or broadcast to the public. That right remains with the copyright owner.

There is a difference between the medium (e.g. transparency / negative / digital file) and the content (the image) but one is of no use without the other. If you were to claim ownership to the transparency this doesn't mean you own its content. The image on the transparency is the copyright of the photographer and without a licence it would be illegal to reproduce it. If you need further reproductions they can be done by your photographer in a professional manner and to a high standard. As mentioned above – the images will be exclusive to you so there is no fear that the photographer will sell them on to another client while you have a licence to use them.

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