

## **Taking Interesting and Appropriate Pictures for Social Media**

In the digital marketing age, images are supreme, and LinkedIn is no different. Interesting and eye-catching photographs can supercharge your visibility and help you to promote your product/company, increase brand awareness, or show off your skills. From composition to editing, this short guide will cover the basic tools, techniques, and tips to start creating stunning pictures for your social LinkedIn feed.

### **What to Post?**

Generally, you want to keep pictures for LinkedIn work-related. It doesn't hurt to sprinkle some personality here and there, but do so in moderation.

- Pictures from conferences, networking events, and the like are classic for a reason. They update your network as to what you're up to, showcase your interest in building relationships, and can help promote your company.
- Pictures from company events/ team meetings etc are also good as they help promote your company's culture.
- Business lunches, as long as they are not bound by secrecy, are great. Bonus points if they include people from your online network as they show interaction with your connections.
- Photos from charity events are also encouraged, especially if your company is involved.
- Keep pictures recent! Unless older pictures add to your post, sticking to more recent pictures will make you more recognisable for in-person networking situations.
- If other people are sharing the frame with you, make sure to ask for permission to post and, if possible, tag them!

### **Composition**

Photo composition refers to the way visual elements are arranged within a picture's frame. An image with good composition will not only be aesthetically pleasing but also convey stronger emotions. Key concepts of photo composition include symmetry and balance.

- **Symmetry:** Symmetry refers to having parts of your composition mirror other parts, creating a balanced image with the subject at its centre. When used inappropriately, symmetry can make for boring, static images, but when done correctly it can create bold, intense, and eye-catching visuals. Standing in front of a beautifully symmetrical building is a good example.
- **Balance:** Although related to symmetry, balance is slightly different. It isn't about mirroring but is rather concerned with how the various quadrants of an image complement each other in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

Unbalanced images unearth feelings of uneasiness and disorientation. A good example is having a busy background and a simple foreground or vice versa.

- Centring: On close up shots, you want to occupy as much of the frame as possible.
- Showing Interaction: Interactions such as eye contact and walking or talking with someone bring a sense of motion and being in the moment, making the image more interesting.
- Spacing and Point of View (POV): Simply moving around with your camera is likely to do wonders for your composition. Closer or further, side-to-side, higher or lower. The different perspectives, angles, and framing option this provides can make the difference between a good photo and a great one.
- Experiment!: None of these guidelines are hard rules. Once you are comfortable with them, 'breaking the rules' and playing around with different shots can lead to the most original of images.

## **Lighting and Colour**

An image's lighting and colour will dictate its atmosphere. Photographers play with them in a myriad of ways, but a couple basic guidelines can optimise them for social media:

- Generally, you want pictures that aren't too bright or too dark. Photographing around sunset, sunrise, or a cloudy day is a good way to achieve a balance. Bright, direct light, especially, is to be avoided, especially if it shines behind a subject as it can make it dark. Artificial lighting such as ring lights can also do a good job.
- Use your camera's flash with caution. It is easy to consider the flash as an easy lighting option, but it can mess a picture up if used inappropriately.
- Loud or vivid colours can be used to catch the eye and make an image more complex.
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- Using a given colour palette, either out of personal preference or in reference to your brand, can make for more cohesive images and social media feeds. Tools such as Adobe Colour can help you create and test colour palettes.

## **Looking Your Best**

Sometimes, you want your face (or more) in the shot. Here's how to look as good as possible

- Simply practising a few poses can do wonders for your pictures. You'll know your angles and be more confident when it's time for the actual shot, and that can be the difference.
- Other things that can improve your confidence include a nice haircut or a smart outfit.
- If comfortable enough, try taking candid pictures! They'll bring some variation to your social media feed and showcase the more genuine, human side of your business/brand.
- Using a simple but interesting background can complicate the shot just enough to catch the eye.
- Show your most normal, everyday smile!

## **Editing**

Once you have snapped the 'perfect' shot, there may still be some work left to do in post-production. Here are a couple things to remember to nail the final details.

- Cameras often produce images where shadows are darker and highlights are brighter than what the eye can naturally see. Adjusting your picture's shadows and highlights can give them more of a realistic appearance. This is easily done with your phone's editing tools. Just don't go too far in either direction! Balance is key.
- If you weren't able to get a shot with your preferred composition, you can try cropping it to achieve the desired effect. You could use your phone's editing tools or third-party apps like Snapseed. Saltwhistle can help with this if you don't have the time!

## **Additional Tips and Tricks**

- Most people view their social media feeds on their phones, making portrait photos (i.e. shooting vertically) very important. For the best portrait pictures, aim for a 1080x1350px aspect ratio.
- If using a phone camera. Make sure to clean it. We often don't realise how dirty our phones can be, and this can be the difference between a blurry picture and a crystal clear image.
- A tripod or a handheld gimbal can help stabilise the image, especially if you're shooting yourself.
- Using the "grid" feature on your phone's camera will help ensure properly composed shots.