

**WORKING with FREELANCE Photographers,
Videographers and Designers**

by **Toni Fitzpenn**
President
Venture Publications & Marketing, Inc.
2710 Longwood Drive
Franklin, TN 37069
(615) 662-0236
email: toni@venturepubs.com
www.venturepubs.com

**A presentation to the National Council of Marketing and Public Relations
San Diego, CA – March 19, 2007**

Copyright 2007 Venture Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

Be Prepared to Work with Creative Sources

1. By establishing relationships with Photographers, Videographers and designers before you need them.

- Ask for recommendations from the corporate sector of your community. Corporations need to illustrate the various facets of their business, as you do your college.
- Use the Internet. This is a great way to view portfolios before you make contact.

2. By creating your personal “sample” files of photos, videos, and design pieces you like. Collect from your mail at home and at your office – magazine photos, brochures, printer promotional pieces, paper company promotional brochures, invitations to art gallery openings, etc. These will provide great ideas and actual examples to share with your photographer, videographer and designer when the time comes for hiring and developing ideas for your next project. REMEMBER: Creative people receive information best visually.

To Hire them: You need to like their work. To Work with them: You must know “why” you like their work. Understanding the “WHY” gives you the tools to get their best work. You are a “Coach” in this process.

Being prepared will produce a better product and be more cost effective for your college. Plus, your freelance creative will enjoy the process and want to work with you again!

PHOTOGRAPHERS

A Key Marketing Truth: “A picture is worth a thousand words.”

Good photography is a major investment. It will more than pay for itself by providing a good image for your college.

What type of photographer are you looking for?

You want a versatile “location shooter” - they can photograph your president, board, campus, students, etc.

How to review a portfolio? Does the photo interest you? Do you like it?

1. Look for overall composition:
 - Look for the use of interesting perspectives or angles
 - Is it clever?
 - Is your eye drawn to the featured subject?

2. Look at the lighting techniques:

- Corporate type portraits - Is the subject separated from the background?
- Are gels (color theatre films) used to enhance atmosphere? Keep it subtle.
- Do photos show both soft “overall even” lighting and high contrast lighting?

3. Look for attention to detail:

- For portrait, did subject have a shiny face, was clothing smooth, were cuffs pulled down, hair in place, etc.?
- Are distracting items in the frame - trash cans, cars, poles or objects coming out of people’s heads?

Questions to ask the Photographer? Here are possible suggestions:

1. Once you establish they can shoot on location, ask what format they use?

You will want digital images of high resolution to offer you the versatility to be used in any media – print to web – and size. Best images will be “raw” images – these allow for greater flexibility.

2. Ask – “What type of lighting do you use for indoor subjects?” You want them to bring in a light system (a power pack and multiple light heads). Generally, a flash on camera or “available light” will not be adequate for indoors. Some sort of fill is always helpful. Bounce flash may produce good results. Your time allotment will affect the lighting possibilities.

3. Will you be able to provide PhotoShop work on the images? Is this included in your fee or extra? This will be for retouching .

4. What is their day rate? Range may be from \$800 to \$2,500 per day - this greatly depends on geographical area and the photographer’s experience. Do not be put off by a high rate. Let them know the range of your budget and see if they will negotiate.

5. Price negotiations:

- You want complete rights and files to the format your designer needs.
- Work for an “all in” price.

STOP HERE and determine if the person’s personality will work well with your executive level staff, faculty and students!

Hiring the photographer – Be prepared with your sample examples.

1. Negotiate your budget: “all in” - thus limiting surprises!

2. Develop a reasonable schedule - shoot day and file delivery deadline.

3. Outline what you will provide:

- Models
- Props
- Helper/escort to get photographer to each set-up smoothly.

4. **Outline what photographer will provide:**
 - Photo Files
 - Lighting
 - Make-up (if necessary). This may be done by theatre person on campus with photographer's direction.
5. **Go over each setup and scout locations if possible. This is must.**

Managing the shoot day – Confirm a week before and day before.

1. **Be Prepared with shoot schedule for all participants:** If you have an all day shoot or the time goes through a mealtime, prepare for food to be available for a quick break. Have water and light snacks available if the photo shoot is over 2 hours.
2. **Monitor each set-up to make sure it is what you had communicated.**
3. **Walkie Talkies, cell phones or a runner may be helpful** for last minute needs.
4. **If you do not have a make-up or hair stylist be prepared with your own styling kit: several new powder puffs, translucent powder, hair spray and hair pick** for those shiny foreheads and flyaway strands of hair.
5. **Ask to see the image the photographer is getting.** He will probably offer this.
 - Check the lighting
 - If people are in the shot, check for shine on foreheads, clothing adjusted properly, etc.
 - If you have any concerns – **now** is the time to speak up.

VIDEOGRAPHERS

How to review a video portfolio?

Overview Questions – Does it tell a story? What is the one point it made – are you convinced? Will you remember it in 24 hours?

1. **Look for overall concept and composition:**
 - Look for the use of interesting perspectives or angles
 - Is it clever?
 - Is the message or purpose clear?
 - Are the edits and breaks appropriate for the style
2. **Look for lighting:**
 - Is the subject separated from the background?
 - Are gels (color theatre films) used to enhance atmosphere? Keep it subtle.
 - Is the lighting pleasing?

3. Look at the color quality

4. Look for attention to detail:

- Do people have shiny faces, was clothing smooth, were cuffs pulled down, hair in place, etc.?
- Are distracting items in the frame - trash cans, cars, poles or objects coming out of people's heads?

5. Listen to the audio – Is the music appropriate? Are the talking parts crisp and clear? Is the script written well and appropriate for the purpose of the video?

After these considerations, does it communicate the message effectively. **Experience and cameras will not matter if the person does not have the creativity talent.**

10 Questions to ask before hiring the videographer –

Be prepared with your ideas or samples of videos

1. **How was the concept developed?** You want to know how much the production company contributed vs. the client.
2. **Who wrote the script and how much came from the client?**
3. **How long was the process from start to finish?**
3. **What was the original budget?** Did you stay in budget?
4. **How many projects of this type have you completed?**
5. **Do you present storyboards?**
6. **What types of cameras, microphones and lighting will you use?**
7. **What type of editing equipment will be used?**
8. **Is the company fully insured?**
9. **What is the typical cost for a project like we want?**
10. **What is included in your budgets and what is not?**
 - Pre and Post work
 - Make-up/ Stylist
 - Food
 - Number of edit changes

Managing the shoot day –

1. **Confirm all participants and schedules one week before and day before.**
2. **Be Prepared with video schedule for all participants:** If you have an all day shoot or the time goes through a mealtime, prepare for food and water to be available.
3. **Monitor each set-up to make sure it is what you had communicated.**
4. **Walkie Talkies and/or a runner may be helpful** for last minute needs.
5. **View the recording from the monitor. Do not assume the cameraman or director is looking for the same things you are!**
 - Check the lighting
 - If people in the shot, check for shine on foreheads, clothing adjusted properly, etc.
 - With any concern – **now** is the time to speak up.

Editing process –

1. Make good notes of exact edit change requests and check these off.
2. Check the cuts and transitions
3. Ask questions and offer ideas

Graphic Designer

A great visual presentation of a written text enables the reader to quickly be engaged and to comprehend the central theme. Professional designers can take your idea and give it real life! And in the process, create a powerful marketing tool!

Reviewing the portfolio –

1. General Observations as You Conduct Your Review

- Is the portfolio filled with similar type clients or is it varied?
- Ask what information the client provided the designer - color direction, a beginning layout, logos, etc.

2. Four Key Areas of Evaluation

Color / B&W:

- If it is color - does the palette work together?
- Is color choice right for the project and market?

Type: Is it legible?

- Do you want to read it?
- Do you know where to read next?
- Does typestyle fit project type and market?

Imagery and Texture:

- Does the imagery – photos or illustration – help communicate the message?
- If used – is texture used well?

Composition:

- Are there levels to indicate important items?
- Does it move you from one point to the next?
- Is the design appropriate for the market?
- Notice the positive and negative space
- Is it clever?

Questions to Ask the Designer –

1. What ideas did the client bring to the project?
2. What are their favorite and least favorite projects?
3. What programs do they work with? How do they deliver the files?

Steps to Hiring the Designer for a Project –

Be prepared with your ideas and samples.

1. **Negotiate the budget.**
 - Are stock photo and illustration fees included?
 - How many revisions are included?
 - Will the designer press check any printing?
 - Will they give notice when you ask for something that can put you over budget?
 - Will retouching – PhotoShop – be billed extra or is it already included?
2. **Establish the project schedule.** Work back from delivery date and build in time for problems.
Key Point - When will the completed text be ready?
3. **Discuss photographic or illustrative needs** and if stock photography or college photos will be used.

General Design Rate Guideline:

All prices will vary depending on geographical area and experience level of designer.

- Logos - \$500 - \$10,000
- Per Page Design - \$150 - \$750
- Average Cost for a four color (both sides):
 - 1 page flyer with Photoshop work – \$875
 - 4 page color flyer with Photoshop work – \$1500-\$2000

Remember with today's technology you are not limited to designers in your area.

Terms to Know:

Leading - space between lines

Kerning - space between 2 or 3 letters allowing them to fit better together

Letter spacing - amount of space between all characters

Tracking - increases or decreases spacing between all characters in a line, paragraph or document. It improves legibility by increasing space between small characters and decreasing space between large characters

Serif Type - Type with a soft line crossing the ending stroke of most characters in Roman typeface

Sans Serif Type - Type without serifs, also called gothic type

Recommended Reference Books:

Graphically Speaking - An Illustrated Guide to the Working Language of Design and Printing by Mark Beach, Publisher - Elk Ridge Publishing, Distributor - North Light Books, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Red Book Color Works 1

The Blue Book Color Works 2

The Yellow Book Color Works 3

The Pastels Book Color Works 4

The Black and White Book Color Works 5, Designer's Ultimate Guide to Working with Color by Dale Russell, first published in US by North Light Books, an imprint of F & W Publications, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio.

Graphic Design Cookbook – Mix & Match Recipes for Faster, Better Layouts by Leonard Koren & R. Wippo Meckler, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA.

Designer's Guide to Color: Boxed Set by Jeanne Allen, James Stockton, Ikuyoshi Shibukawa, and Ymi Takahashi, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA.

Recommended Publications:

Graphic Design USA (gdusa.com)

Communications Arts (commarts.com/CA)

Eye (eyemagazine.com)

CMYK (cmykmag.com)

How (howdesign.com)

Print (printmag.com)

Royal (theroyalmagazine.com)

Designer Portfolio Sites:

someoddpilot.com

iso50.com

timmarrs.com.uk

planetpropaganda.com

rodrigocorrall.com

riordondesign.com

andersonthomas.com

Stock Image Sites:

Veer Images (veer.com)

The I Spot (theispot.com)

Artzooks (artzooks.com)

Jupiter Images (jupiterimages.com)

Shutterstock (shutterstock.com)

Getty Images (gettyimages.com)

iStockphoto.com

Photos.com