

MARKETING: BETTER PHOTOGRAPHY

Never Underestimate The Power of a Picture

By Lorin Anderson, President

One of the areas I knew very little about when I started my career as an editor at Golf Digest was professional photography. But one of the most interesting benefits of working at the magazines was getting to work with some of the best photographers in all of sports. Over the years I was schooled by the masters in everything from lighting to composition to color schemes. As I spent more and more time around these fantastic picture takers, I learned to never underestimate the value of a great picture, and you shouldn't either.

Photos are incredibly important to helping you tell your story. People look at your photos on your website and decide quickly if you look friendly, if your facility looks like someplace they'd want to spend time and even if your students look like they are having fun. Much is conveyed in every photograph you post involving your business so take some care and planning to create the image that you want to portray to the golfing public.

Unfortunately, I see too many of our members using substandard photos on their websites, email blasts and even the portraits they send to the media. Come on members, you can do better!

Every instructor needs to invest in good photography for their website, headshots, flyers, brochures and print media. It's an area where many instructors fall woefully short compared to what they should and could do to present themselves and their programs in a professional manner.

Over the years I've probably been on 200 or more photoshoots and I learned a lot of tips and tricks that I'm happy to pass along for your benefit.

What you will find is that the devil is in the details. Preparation before the shoot begins will make a huge difference in the quality of the photos you get out of the shoot.

Here are my top 12 keys to a great photo shoot that will insure you have great pictures for all of your business needs:

1. Photos should be updated every 2-3 years including headshots, teaching shots, shots of



The key to photos with students is lighting up the teacher's face.



A key to great photos is shooting during the early morning or late afternoon light.



Clean sky backgrounds are best. Set the camera lower to achieve this look. Also, bright, solid color shirts reproduce best in most instances. Avoid fancies and stripes.

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your swing, facility shots and any other photos of your programs that you may need for promotion.

2. Wear a bright solid-color shirt (yellow, red, orange, peach or light blue all work very well) and mid-tone khaki or gray pants. Avoid black, white, dark brown and dark green in shirts or pants.

3. Try to have your photographer shoot with all sky or all grass backgrounds whenever possible. This can be done when demonstrating on an elevated tee with the camera set low or when you're in the low portion of a fairway and the camera is set high.

4. Shoot swing and drill demonstration shots on a tee on the golf course where the grass is in perfect condition, do not shoot on the driving range if you don't have to. It always looks messy and the backgrounds are usually filled with buildings, carts or cart paths.

5. Don't wear a hat or sunglasses unless that is part of your trademark look. Hats create shadows on your face and hiding your face is a big no-no when trying to create your brand image through good photography. You are the brand, don't make it harder for people to feel like they are getting to know you because your photos conceal your face.

6. Your photographer should concentrate on bracketing the light exposures for each picture and making sure your face is well lit. Ask them if they have a reflector or strobe to properly light your face.

7. Budget enough time for your shoot so you don't have to rush and have a back up day available so you can postpone if it's cloudy.

8. Best time to shoot is from 8-10 in the mornings or 4-7 in the afternoons during the summer season. Do any indoor shots before or after these times. The light is softer and the



When picturing students, make sure you get a signed waiver from them to use their images for marketing.

shadows less harsh early or late in the day and the magazines always shoot instruction photos during these time frames for optimal lighting.

9. An important note about using student models in the photos with you: Choose people that have fun, smile and are generally relaxed. Sometimes models become very self-conscious and look stiff and uncomfortable on camera. Make sure all models sign a release that says you may use their picture. Most photographers should have a release form you can use for this purpose. (NOTE: We also provide a generic model release on the Proponent Group members website under Business Templates.)

Steal From the Pros to Get "The Look"

- This action shot for an instruction book highlights many of the photography keys mentioned above. For example:
- The teacher is wearing a bright, solid-color shirt, mid-tone pants and no hat.
- The photo was taken in early morning light to create a warm golden tone.
- The camera is low to the ground and the golfer is on an elevated tee to create a clean blue sky background without distractions.
- The golfer is swinging into the sun to create best possible facial lighting.



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10. For your website, brochures and flyers, make sure you have a man, woman and child model available for the shoot as you'll want to use different combinations of these models for various programs you will be promoting.

11. Make sure you have a complete shot list on paper before you start the shoot so that you and photographer can check off each shot as it is completed. Without a list, you will inevitably forget at least one critical shot that you will need later for a brochure or your website.

12. Keep costs down. Consider bartering services with an area photographer who has some experience shooting outdoor sports and plays golf. A lot of teachers will trade a series of lessons for a 2-3 hour photo shoot straight up.



Golf is supposed to be fun. Does your photography convey that golf instruction is going to be fun? It should.



Everyone needs a professional portrait. When cropping your headshot, trim just above the cap and just below the second button.



Every teacher should have a wide shot of their facilities to set the scene. Shoot this picture early in the morning for maximum effect. Make sure the facility is tidy and the turf and trees are in midseason color.