

Why Your Business Needs Professional Commercial Photography

Why should I? That is often the response from business owners when addressing the need for professional photography in their businesses. There are several answers to this question, and they are more important than one may think.

Business owners who don't feel the need to use professional commercial photography generally fall into two groups: Those who don't feel they need professional photography at all and those who take their own photographs and feel that they are "good enough".

"I don't think I need it." I recently had the owner of a machine shop tell me that he feels he does not need professional photography because he is not selling a standard product. However, professional photography is not only used to sell standard products. It demonstrates the type of work the company is capable of producing. Consider this paraphrased exercise from the book "Going Visual" by Alexis Gerard and Bob Goldstein: Look around you. Think about how you would describe what you see in writing as opposed to taking a picture. How long would it take? Would your words capture every detail? By displaying photographs of the various types of parts he has produced for other customers, his prospective customers can get a better idea of what his company is capable of.

"I think my pictures are good enough." This reasoning is generally a reaction to the sometimes high cost of professional commercial photography. Have you ever done something yourself to save money, then had a professional do it over? We all have at some point in our lives. You were able to recognize the deficiency and take steps to correct it. However, that may not be the case when using non-professionally produced photographs to sell a product or service. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine how many potential customers may have looked at your product or service and, because of the lower quality of the images, simply moved on to your competition.

This is especially true in this age of internet commerce, where you may only have a few seconds to make an impression with your customer and the photograph is the only means of conveying visually important details.

Imagine yourself as your customer. When comparing two similar products, would you be more inclined to purchase the product that is presented in a more pleasing and attractive way, one that clearly shows the detail of the product? Or the product that is shown with photographs that are blurry and dark, with harsh distracting shadows and reflections? In addition to the product itself, the use of professional photography enhances the overall professionalism of your business and gives your business an edge over your competition that's not using professional photography. Large companies spend millions of dollars per year on professional commercial photography, not because they like to spend money, because they know it works!

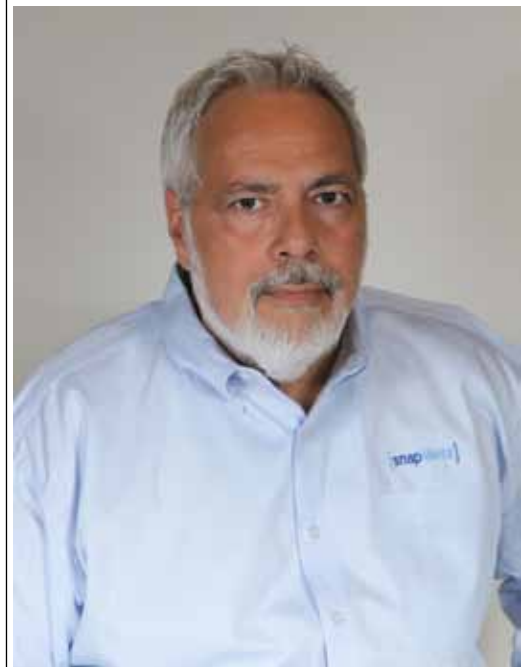
We eat with our eyes. We buy with our eyes. Humans are visual animals. There are many times more nerve fibers dedicated to our sense of sight than any of our other senses. If someone describes something to you, don't you immediately visualize it in your mind? You have spent many weeks, months and possibly years on your business and products. Yet, all of that hard work and dedication may be at the mercy of a couple of million cells that transform our world into something that we can comprehend and understand. Professional photography is simply a way to accurately represent the appearance of your product or service.

It cannot compensate for inferior quality, bad customer service or poor workmanship. However, it can give your business the edge it needs over the competition to win over customers who can then experience the benefit of your product or service.

Professional commercial photography does not have to be expensive. There are many

options available, with prices that start from a couple of hundred dollars. As a general rule, the more complex the setting used and the more elaborate the lighting required, the more expensive it will be. Some photographers will charge separately for the individual pictures, some won't (or it will depend on the type of photography). Some will retain ownership rights to the photos and charge licensing fees, some will not. It is important to ask these questions and select the photographer that best suits your situation. And be sure to look at samples of their work.

Enjoy the benefits of professional commercial photography in your business!



by Jim Graziano

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