

# Choosing the right professional photographer for your needs

Tips and a short guide to help you choose a pro photographer to work with, by Keith Cooper of Northlight Images.

*I've written this short note to help people looking for a professional photographer get the best out of using one. Hopefully this helps both clients -and- photographers understand how to get the best results - Keith*

If you'd like to have a chat about any of the issues mentioned, please feel free to give Keith a call at Northlight:

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## What photos do you need?

It may come as a surprise when I say that a fair proportion of our new clients don't know exactly what they want.

Your photographer can help and should go through this in some detail with you. Remember, it's much easier to sort things out before anyone turns up to take your photos.

If you're not sure, ask what might look good. Hopefully, you've already seen some of the photographer's work. Ask them about it and how what they do is relevant to what you need.

The best photographers will take time to understand what message you are trying to convey. It's their job to make this easier for you.

## Which photographer?

Find someone who understands your business and can help convey the message you are looking for.

Ask them what they know about your area of business.

## What don't they do?

If you were looking to repair your gas boiler, a web site showing photocopiers might not be the way to go?

If you're looking for commercial photos, then lots of pictures of brides or portraits on a web site is a big clue that your work is not their chosen specialism.

Look around our web site to see the range of areas Northlight Images covers, but notice too what isn't there. We don't photograph weddings, sports, family portraits, or social events.

Part of being an expert is knowing what you are best at and when to suggest someone else. If what you need is outside their specialism or area of work, they will usually have suggestions for other pro photographers who can help.

## Using a specialist

A specialist professional photographer will quickly and efficiently get the results you want, often more effectively than a general purpose photographer.



Does your chosen photographer use specialist equipment and lenses? This is a sign of commitment and investment in getting the best results.

Make use of your photographer's experience. This can include creative and practical advice before and after the shoot. True professionals want clients to get the very best out of images supplied and be proud of how they've helped you.

### How are you going to use your photos?

Have a good idea of what you want to use the photos for (web/print for example). Most professional photographers will offer you a quote based on how you want to use the images.

Think through this and consider if you might want to re-use the photos at a later date for a different campaign or web site. Be careful to find out just what usage rights you are getting for your photos – it's all too easy to find hidden costs down the line.

*Personally I like to make sure this is all sorted out before I take any photos for a client, since I've never liked hidden prices and add-ons for products for myself and I don't see why others should either.*

### So, how much will it cost you?

If it's not clear, ask for a full breakdown of how your photographer's charges are put together.

Ask how many photos you will get from a shoot? Is this a hard limit?

*For example, on many architectural projects I may shoot a few more photos than strictly needed and supply these without extra charge. Our rates are based on the length of the job and types of image needed. If you wanted 15 basic images and on the day I took 19, which I think look good, I'm not going to quibble over the extra few shots.*

The industrial photo below is one such example of an unplanned 'extra shot' taken on a trip to a steel foundry in the UK for a US client.



Make sure you check on details such as travel expenses and time.

*For example, in the UK we don't charge travel expenses in Leicestershire and then only mileage for much of the central UK.*

Watch out too for hidden processing fees, minimum rates and licensing costs for your photos.

Is your photographer VAT registered?

VAT registration and a real (limited) company are sound signs of a professional commercially oriented business.

### Other things to note

Are your photos going to appear elsewhere?

It's not unknown for photographer to submit images to stock libraries, where they could easily be found and used by your competitors.

We start from the assumption that that we won't use your photos for any other use. All the images on this site are used with permission.

### Can we help you?

Hopefully this guide has been useful in helping you make more effective use of a professional photographer for your business.

We've written a number of short articles that may also be of help

[Before we send a photography quote](#): All the information we need to know from you before we send you a photography quote and everything you need to know about our services and terms before you ask us for a quotation or price for photography

[How we license our images](#): How we license our images, what you can and cannot do with them. Image and photo licensing explained for our clients.

[Pro photography – what you get for your money](#): Everyone's a photographer these days ... Well no they are not, especially if you want great images that truly work for your business, and a professional service. Here are some of the reasons we charge what we do for all the services we provide our clients.

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