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**COMMUNICATING THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHS: A GUIDE FOR
PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS**

by
Carol Ann DeSimine

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
June 1999

Approved by _____
Professor

Date Approved June 24, 1999

ABSTRACT

Carol Ann DeSimine

Communicating Through Photographs: A Guide for Public Relations Professionals. 1999. Advisor: Dr. Donald Bagin. Seminar in Public Relations, Graduate Division of Rowan University.

The purpose of preparing this guide was to create a resource for public relations professionals to refer to when faced with the task of placing photographs in publications. The assumption is that most public relations professionals are not trained to think visually, partly because their education is focused on writing and virtually ignores aesthetics. Since readership surveys find that people prefer photographs over the written word, and that pictures capture attention quicker than headlines, it is essential that public relations people know how to use visuals to enhance a message. The primary research methods of this study were examination of literature appropriate to the photographic and publishing processes, interviews with experts in the field, and an investigation of electronic resources. The conclusions drawn provide the reader with limited basics of photography, such as how to plan a shoot, how to take a picture and how to submit a photo to the printer. Primarily, this guide is intended to teach public relations professionals how to increase the effectiveness of their publications through the use of important photographic elements such as composition, content and placement.

MINI-ABSTRACT

Carol Ann DeSimine

Communicating Through Photographs: A Guide for Public Relations Professionals. 1999. Advisor: Dr. Donald Bagin. Seminar in Public Relations, Graduate Division of Rowan University.

This guide is intended to teach public relations professionals how to increase the effectiveness of publications through the use of photographs. It addresses three areas: the basics of photography, the role photographic elements play in enhancing a layout, and the rising concerns presented with the advent of rapidly changing technologies.

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Special thanks to my partner, Richard, for giving me his love, encouragement and support, not only during this project but every day.

Thanks, too, to my parents, Sam and Grace DeSimine, for teaching me to be my own person, and for always being there, even when I didn't realize that having someone "there" was so important.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Confucius is attributed with having first used the popular adage, "A picture speaks a thousand words." That was back in 500 B.C. The quickly growing popularity of photography since its invention in 1839 helped to support this statement. Today, as we approach the 21st century, Confucius's words ring truer than ever: One photograph can tell the story of an entire event. However, to tell the *right* story, the *right* photograph must be used in the *right* way. In his master's thesis, *Research Findings and Proven Techniques for Producing Effective Promotional Literature*, Brian McCallum states, "Just as the right picture can dramatically boost the impact of your message, the wrong photograph can distract and confuse your reader."¹

To many public relations professionals, obtaining a good photograph and then placing it in a publication to provide impact or to communicate an idea succinctly is often a challenge. According to G.A. Marken in an article for *Public Relations Quarterly*, "Most public relations people are fairly gifted with the spoken and written word But most ignore or underestimate how much more value and impact they can get with good photographs."² Public Relations Specialist Heather Simmons agrees, "Photography is often an afterthought. Among PR professionals the focus is on the message, and there

¹ Brian C. McCallum, *Research Findings and Proven Techniques for Producing Effective Promotional Literature*. Master's thesis. Rowan College of New Jersey, 1995: 145.

² G. A. Marken, "Public Relations Photos . . . Beyond the Written Word." *Public Relations Quarterly*, Summer 1993, vol. 38, no. 2: 7.

seems to be little understanding of how photography impacts, enhances or detracts from that message."³

Even public relations people who recognize the importance of using photographs are often not knowledgeable enough to use them to achieve maximum effect. Most colleges and universities do not require their public relations students to take photography courses. If photography is discussed, it's usually in publication layout and design courses, where the focus is on the placement and legibility of copy. Once in the field, these individuals realize that using photographs in publications is as effective as using words to relay messages to the reader and requires just as much thought.

Need

The need for this study, then, is evident in the lack of preparedness of public relations professionals regarding the use of photography upon entering the "real world." At some point in their careers, these individuals are almost certain to be faced with the challenge of working with photographs.

Even public relations professionals experienced in the use of photography will find themselves having to rethink traditional methods and relearn new ones because of the rapid influx of new and ever-changing technologies.

Too often, professionals experiment with new technologies simply because they are available, even though the results may be inferior to traditional methods. A case in point is the digital camera, which provides instant results, but until recently, produced less-than-perfect images. In photography, perfection takes time, expertise, and the right equipment. This often translates into dollar signs. In an article by Maria Piscopo for *Communication Arts*, photographer Brian Trembley states, ". . . a photographer who tries

³ Heather Simmons, on-line interview, June 22, 1999.

to keep up with technology can be like keeping up with the Joneses. Technology today is a money pit, especially in the areas of digital imaging."⁴

A public relations professional must be able to sort through emerging technologies to determine what is essential and what is not. Stephen Webster, a photo-illustrator from Columbus, Ohio, says, "Don't jump on every whiz-bang bandwagon that comes along. It is very important to stay aware of what is out there, but only adopt what you truly need to accomplish your already created goals."⁵

Purpose

The intent of writing this guide was to provide public relations professionals with a resource to refer to when producing publications that require photographs, in particular, newsletters, house organs, brochures and other promotional materials. Some areas addressed are: (1) working with a photographer, (2) determining the message, (3) enhancing the message through composition and content, (4) preparing the photograph for reproduction, and (5) utilizing current technology.

Editors will find this guide useful because it provides a "hands-on" approach to acquiring photographs and then placing them; managers will find the guide useful because it will arm them with the knowledge to oversee their organization's printed material with a discerning eye for quality images that add impact and capture attention.

Importance

While many books and periodicals about communications include chapters on using photographs, few exist that dedicate themselves to the subject. Philip N. Douglass

⁴ Maria Piscopo, "Keeping Up With New Technology." *Communication Arts*, May/June 1998. <http://www.commarts.com> (December 15, 1998).

⁵ Ibid.

states, "Only four books have been published about organizational photojournalism."⁶ The copyright dates of these publications range from 1971 to 1995. Due to the constant changes in the methods applied to producing publications as a result of emerging technologies, even a resource written only four years ago may be outdated.

This guide provides an up-to-date reference for public relations professionals. It offers a thorough explanation of using photographs in publications, from the conceptual phase through the finalized product. It focuses primarily on the basics of photography because, as Maria Piscopo states in her article, *Keeping Up With New Technology*, "The real secret is not so much keeping up with the latest upgrade of software or hardware. It is the knowledge and skill of your art."⁷ This guide would not be complete, however, if it did not provide a listing of additional resources such as periodicals and on-line sites for professionals to refer to in their efforts to remain knowledgeable of the changes that are taking place in the field, particularly changes pertaining to technology.

Glossary of Terms

Caption — The text around a photograph that describes the action or identifies the people who appear in the photograph.

Continuous tone — A photograph or other art that contains black and white, and the variations of grays between them.

Contrast — The difference in darkness or density between tones within a photograph.

Cropping — Eliminating unwanted material from a photograph from its outer edges, either to create a stronger image or to change the photograph's dimensions.

Depth of field — The area between the nearest and farthest points from the camera that are sharply in focus.

⁶ Philip N. Douglis, "Visual Literacy Made Simple: Allstate's Summaria Shows How." *Communication World*, February 12, 1997, vol. 14, no. 4: 43.

⁷ Piscopo.

Digitized image — A photograph that is transformed into digital information through downloading or scanning into a computer so it can be read and manipulated by image editing software. Also, an image taken with a digital camera.

Distortion — Aberrations or changes in perspective caused by the camera being too close or too far away from the subject.

dpi — The number of dots, or pixels, per inch in a halftone or digitized image.

Duotone — A technique used primarily for photographs in two-color publications, where a color is screened over a black and white photograph, resulting in different tones according to the various shades of gray in the original.

Figure — The main subject in a photograph.

Fill light — A source of illumination that lightens shadows cast by the main light, thereby reducing contrast in a photograph.

Frame — The outer edges of an image or a single image within a roll of film.

Grain — A speckled or mottled effect usually caused by enlarging or improper exposure.

Ground — The surroundings, or background, of the main subject in a photograph.

Halftone — A printing plate made by photographing an image through a screen so the image is converted to line art, that is, a series of dots where the darker shades have greater density than the lighter shades.

Pixel — The smallest part of a computer graphic, whose resolution determines the density of type and graphics.

Stock photography — Photographic images obtained from an agency that are typically general in subject matter. The buyer selects images from a catalog or on-line and, typically, pays a royalty fee to use them.

Limitations

This guide does not teach readers how to take prize-winning photographs, although principles of photography are discussed. It does not teach how to use computer

hardware or software, but these are touched on as well. Because of the rapid changes in technology, offering too many technical details of any one aspect may prove to be useless to the reader. To avoid providing the reader with outdated information, only basics are covered. However, suggestions are offered on how to keep current with emerging technologies.

While it is assumed that most people can judge between a quality photograph and an inferior one, this is not necessarily true. To some, a photograph is simply a picture. Aesthetic appreciation is subjective: There is no one definitive way to use a photograph, or one photograph that will be pleasing to everyone. Oftentimes, photographs effect a psychological response; that is, the reader is not even conscious of the persuasive powers of the image, but is "drawn in" nonetheless.

Therefore, this guide does not claim to be the arbiter of what a good photograph must be. It does, however, provide principles used by photographers, graphic designers, editors, and printers for professionals to refer to when developing their own public relations printed materials. Advertising photography is not covered in great detail here since, overall, it serves a different purpose than public relations photography.

Plan of Study

Research for this guide encompassed the following:

- Interviews from experts in the field
- Selected results of keyword searches of various databases available at the Rowan University Library, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and the Margaret E. Heggan Free Library of Washington Township
- Selected results of Internet searches using various combinations of keywords such as *photography*, *public relations* and *visual communication*
- Information found in public relations textbooks and periodicals geared toward professionals in the communication arts

- More than ten years of personal experience as a photographer and editor of various types of publications

This guide covers three primary phases of publication production pertaining to photographs: the conceptual phase, the developmental phase, and the production phase. The conceptual phase addresses the areas of previsualization; determining the message the reader should derive from viewing a photograph; and the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* of taking the photograph. The developmental phase includes placing the photograph in a publication to achieve the maximum effect through selection, location and cropping. The production phase requires making decisions about the methods used to reproduce photographs in a document; for example, will the photos be in color or black and white, and on which type of paper will they be printed?

In an organization, one person may not be responsible for more than one of the three phases; however, if each person understands the process as a whole, a greater chance exists that each phase will be completed satisfactorily, making each other's job much, much easier.

CHAPTER II: RELATED LITERATURE

Resources about photography provided much information for this study, as did resources about public relations. However, only a few addressed both subjects as one entity. Although many keywords in many variations were used in the author's search for information, the subject will be referred to as *public relations photography* unless noted otherwise.

Related literature about public relations photography was found in three libraries: the library of Rowan University; the Philadelphia Free Library, and the Margaret E. Heggan Free Public Library in Washington Township, New Jersey. Other sources include extensive searches of various keyword combinations on the Internet through the America On-Line and Netscape Web browsers, referrals from public relations professionals, and literature from the author's personal library.

Libraries

The author performed several database searches at the library of Rowan University. While a search of the Dissertation Abstracts database revealed several related titles, only two were useful. A search of the library's collection generated two relevant titles, and five relevant articles were found through a search of the ABI/Inform and Lexis-Nexis databases of periodicals.

At the Free Library of Philadelphia, a search of its holdings yielded only one relevant title. A search of ProQuest Dissertation Abstracts OnDisc was conducted of titles from 1994 through December 1998. Using *public relations*, *visual communication*, and *communications and photography* as keywords, only one relevant title was identified:

Reader Interpretation of Meaning From Documentary Photography, written in 1995 by Frank Lee Petrella for his Ph.D. at the University of Iowa.

Also at the Philadelphia Free Library, the InfoTrac 2000 database was used to search periodical titles. A search of the Business Index ASAP from 1995 through December 1998, using various keyword combinations, generated two relevant titles. The General Reference Center GOLD from 1994 through December 1998 yielded no related titles; and the National Newspaper Index generated one relevant title under the subject of *photojournalism*.

At the Margaret E. Heggan Free Public Library, a search on InfoTrac yielded several titles about digital editing. However, only one title, from *American Photo* magazine, proved to be relevant. The library's collection did not include any additional literature related to the subject.

Other Sources

Thesis advisor Dr. Don Bagin provided the author with a copy of *Research Findings and Proven Techniques for Producing Effective Promotional Literature*, a thesis by Rowan University graduate Brian C. McCallum. Section 8 of his thesis, "Using Photographs and Illustrations" provided useful information, and the bibliography included several relevant titles. Dr. Bagin also provided issues of *communication briefings* that were used in this study.

The author's personal library included four books about photography and four books about public relations and publications layout that were useful to this study.

The author conducted an extensive on-line search using the America On-Line and Netscape Web browsers. Of the many matches generated through the use of various combinations of the keywords *photography*, *public relations*, *publications* and *communications*, only two were helpful to the study: (1) the Web site of the American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP) included articles about digital photography and

provided a list of contact people; (2) the Web site of the periodical *Communication Arts* included articles about digital photography. Also, the author searched the archives of a number of different periodicals available through Warner Brothers' PATHFINDER Network, where two articles were found about digital photography: one from *Fortune* and another from *Time*.

Interviews were conducted with experts in the field. In a personal interview, Mark Pirolli, co-owner of Pirolli Printing in Bellmawr, New Jersey, described the editor/printer relationship and the technical aspects of the printing process. Questions were posed on-line to photographer Peter Lien, of Lien/Nibauer Photographer, Inc., who is also the President of the Philadelphia chapter of the American Society of Media Photographers. Mr. Lien offered tips on portraiture photography and discussed the impact of digitalization. In another interview conducted on-line, Heather Simmons, public relations specialist and desktop publishing instructor at Gloucester County Community College in Sewell, New Jersey, discussed the process of selecting images and assembling a publication.

Selected Material

Following is selected material derived from resources relevant to the subject of the effective use of photography for public relations purposes. These findings are organized in three major sections: (1) resources about photographic technique, (2) resources about using photographs for public relations purposes, and (3) resources about changing technologies as they affect public relations photography. Information is then broken down into subcategories.

Related Research for Section 1: Photographic Technique

David H. Curl writes in *Photocommunication*, "Photography is the closest thing we have to a universal medium of communication." He discusses the fundamental

elements of visual vocabulary — subject matter, perspective, light and composition — and how each affects the viewer. He offers all the information that public relations practitioners should know when faced with the tasks of shooting, developing and printing their own photographs, from types of equipment to exposure controls and darkroom procedures. However, he concludes that, while important, technical processes are "merely a means to an end . . . creating an image that communicates something . . ." He feels the real test is in the visualization — learning how to *see*.⁸

Evaluating Technical Quality

Parker states, "A good photograph stands apart from the rest because it both 'feels right' and 'looks good.' It captures our attention, conveys emotion and tells a story." To do this, it must be technically correct. He lists four elements that must be evaluated when judging a photo's merit: focus, clarity, contrast and brightness.⁹

Understanding the photographic process will help editors and public relations professionals to recognize problems in a photograph. McDougall and Hampton offer tips for editors who have limited experience behind a camera's lens. They suggest that photo editors who have never developed film or made a print should at least watch each step and note the time and skill it takes to make a quality print. As a result, they will be able to set more realistic deadlines, get better photos and improve morale of all involved.

They also discuss how to recognize if a photo has been manipulated through lens variation, depth of field, retouching, and the common darkroom procedures of dodging,

⁸ David H. Curl, *Photocommunication: A Guide to Creative Photography*. Oshtemo, MI: Oak Woods Media, Inc., 1984: 1-5.

⁹ Roger C. Parker, *Looking Good In Print: A Guide to Basic Design for Desktop Publishing*. Chapel Hill, NC: Ventana Press, Inc., 1993: 139-42.

burning, and bleaching. They warn editors to look for the tell-tale signs that may change a photo's meaning — halos and strong demarcations between dark and light.¹⁰

Composition

McDougall and Hampton describe composition as the "architectural design of a picture." They add that how effectively a photo conveys its message is evaluated on how well composition enhances content.

Good photographers know the rules of effective composition, but, as Davis says, "if they followed them religiously, there would be little chance for personal expression and picture-taking would become a simple matter of following instructions." Nonetheless, rules exist for a reason, and anyone responsible for choosing photos for publications should know and apply them to determine if and why an image "works."¹¹

Curl lists the rules in *Photocommunication*, along with the other elements of composition whose arrangement helps to enhance content and convey a message: form, line, tone, space, texture and rhythm.¹² McDougall and Hampton add *scale* to this list and explain how it works to demonstrate the size of an object.¹³

Taking the Picture

According to Parker, "A good photographer has an eye for where to point the lens and when to click the shutter to capture images that both convey emotion and tell a

¹⁰ Angus McDougall and Veita Jo Hampton. *Picture Editing & Layout: A Guide to Better Visual Communication*. Columbia, MO: Viscom Press, 1990: 57-62.

¹¹ Phil Davis, *Photography*. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1990: 62-67.

¹² Curl 36-44.

¹³ McDougall and Hampton 40-41.

story." He states that the best photographs contain a decisive moment, powerful visual imagery, and strong cropping and framing.¹⁴

In the event editors or public relations professionals find themselves having to shoot the picture, Conover offers several basic tips on how to obtain a good photograph for printing. He discusses how to handle lighting, shadows and background. He strongly suggests shooting several different exposures of the same shot, then selecting one best-suited for the intended purpose, and the paper and printing method to be used.¹⁵

McDougall and Hampton describe how the message of a photo can change by shooting it from different viewpoints, framing a shot to include more or less, juxtaposing the subject with other objects, and rearranging elements to achieve greater significance of the center of interest. They also provide suggestions on handling the subjective, that is, humor, tastefulness, dubious behavior, and embarrassing situations.¹⁶ Upton adds that looking down on someone as you shoot can be condescending; looking up can make the same person appear impressive or bigger than life, and shooting at the same level creates a sense of intimacy.¹⁷

Lighting

The use of light in a photograph may make the difference between a natural-looking image or one that seems contrived. Adding light to a photo can make a scene appear bright and happy and draw attention to an area. According to Upton, "A viewer's

¹⁴ Parker 140.

¹⁵ Theodore E. Conover. *Graphic Communications Today*. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company, 1990: 110-111.

¹⁶ McDougall and Hampton 4-19.

¹⁷ Barbara London Upton and John Upton. *Photography*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989: 9.

eye tends to go to the lightest part of a picture first, which means that light, especially when it contrasts with a darker background, can direct attention to the most important areas of a photo."¹⁸

Most people are accustomed to using point-and-flash cameras but do not realize that on-camera flash often results in dramatic shadows, uneven exposure, and harshness. Davis offers a thorough explanation of the various types of lighting, both available and electronic, and provides examples with images that are diverse in subject matter and situation. He stresses the importance of the quality of light in photos: "If you use light effectively, your pictures will attract attention and admiration; if you ignore light, be prepared to have your photographs ignored, too."¹⁹

Variation Through the Lens

For a 35mm camera, a 50mm lens is the standard because its focal length approximates the characteristics of the human eye. Wide angle lenses, that is, anything shorter than 35mm, are useful in low-light and restricted space situations, and allow for greater depth of field. Telephoto lenses, that is, 85mm or longer, are useful when it is physically difficult to get in close to a subject. For portraits, the author suggests using a 135mm lens, because anything wider can result in an unflattering and disfiguring portrayal of the subject.

Editors must be aware, however, of how lenses can distort an image. According to McDougall and Hampton, wide angle lenses:

- expand space by increasing distance between objects from front to back.
- magnify foreground subjects and diminish backgrounds.
- distort shapes when pointed at oblique angles.

¹⁸ Ibid 8.

¹⁹ Davis 161-185.

- create caricatures when used for full-frame portraits.

Telephoto lenses compress space and make elements in a scene appear closer together.²⁰

Related Research for Section 2: Using Photographs in Publications

The experts agree that the most important reason to use photographs in publications is to relay a message. Marken states that instead of writing an article and then considering how to illustrate it, the time for public relations professionals to think of visual effects is the same time they're thinking of copy. When they think in terms of pictures and illustrations, their writing becomes more visual and more alive, which increases the impact of what they are trying to say. He says, "Photographs can communicate quickly, compellingly, dramatically, honestly and simply." He gives three reasons public relations professionals should use photographs as often as possible: (1) to communicate information quickly; (2) to create excitement without easily recognized bias; and (3) to offer graphic proof of intangibles such as market acceptance, product leadership, high-quality volume production, and dynamic management.²¹

Parker stresses the importance of using photos in publications: "Photographs lend authority and realism to a publication, and they accomplish far more with a single image than a comparable amount of text can." He reports that numerous studies have shown that readers are more likely to believe a story if it features a photo.²²

Heather Simmons relies on photographs in her college newsletter to attract a diverse audience. While her primary audience is internal, that is, faculty and staff, the newsletter is also mailed to selected alumni, donors, county officials, high school

²⁰ McDougall and Hampton 58-59.

²¹ Marken 7-9.

²² Parker 138-140.

administrators, and the like. The purpose is to raise awareness of the activities available on campus, to entice readers to come to campus, and to inform them of the quality of the education offered at the campus. She finds that using unusual and interesting photos helps to communicate those messages.

Determining the Message

To determine how readers will relate to a photograph, an editor should understand the psychology of the target audience. This makes it easier to decide the feeling to impart when depicting a situation, product or location. Once the mood is determined, editors should pre-visualize how the photograph will work best to send the message.²³

Working With a Photographer

Many public relations practitioners are not responsible for actually shooting the photos they publish, but still are responsible for getting a good shot through the hire of a photographer. Conover gives two major factors to consider in choosing a photographer for a job: (1) the creativity of the photographer, and (2) the quality of the images the photographer captures. He stresses that advanced planning is extremely important, from knowing what you want to get in a shot to ordering the final prints.²⁴ Marken feels the most important information to communicate to a photographer is what you want your photos to say, and he provides a checklist of details to consider when planning a shoot.²⁵

Heather Simmons states points that she considers when assigning a job to a photographer: "I try to keep the reader in mind. What kind of shot will best tell the story?"

²³ Upton 8.

²⁴ Conover 109-110.

²⁵ Marken 11.

What will look natural and unposed? What will attract the attention of the 3- or 30-second reader?"

Peter Lien says that to establish an good relationship with a photographer, pay a reasonable fee. This will ensure honesty in that individual's work as well.²⁶

Photo Selection

During the selection process, editors should first consider how a photograph would serve to communicate the intended message. McDougall and Hampton list questions editors should ask themselves when deciding if a photo is worth publishing. If the questions cannot be answered satisfactorily, they suggest that the space be used for something more important. They state that it is a mistake to assume that all readers will respond to a photo in the same way, so editors should remain objective in their selections. To maintain credibility, editors should never publish a photo that lies, and they should be sensitive to the community's cultural mores.²⁷

Parker states, "Half the battle of producing professional, attractive layouts is making sure you pick the best shots possible."²⁸ Simmons says that when she selects photos for her publications, she "looks for action, natural poses and sometimes something unexpected."

The Psychology of Perception

McDougall and Hampton state, "Understanding perception psychology can make picture editors better communicators." They report on findings of researchers Zakia and Weber, leaders in exploring the relationship between Gestalt psychology and

²⁶ Peter Lien, on-line interview, June 20, 1999.

²⁷ McDougall and Hampton 2.

²⁸ Parker 139.

photography. Gestalt is the grouping of visual elements into a single form, which can only be perceived when separated from its background by some type of contrast.

Weber explains the importance of the relationship between figure (that which catches our attention) and ground (the surroundings): "When viewers look at a photo, it takes only 1/100 of a second to determine what becomes figure." This depends not only on the characteristics of the photo, but on the knowledge, interests, and cultural background of the viewer. To communicate a message successfully, figure must stand out clearly in contrast to the background.

According to Zakia, the following identifiable characteristics define the figure-ground relationship:

- Figure is usually smaller than ground.
- Figure appears to have a boundary, ground does not.
- Figure has a stronger shape than ground.
- Figure usually appears closer than ground even if both are in the same place.

An editor should deliberately look at the figure-ground relationship to make sure it does not garble a photo's message.²⁹

Layout

McDougall and Hampton state that photos are important elements in a layout and advise against using them simply as arbitrary hole fillers. They list common practices that should be avoided because they compromise a photo's quality:

- Using a photo as a divider of two side-by-side headlines.
- Sizing a photo to fit perfectly into a column of type.
- Including non-essential areas of a photo simply to fill up space.

²⁹ McDougall and Hampton 47.

They also state that the shape and size of any photos should be determined before page layout begins. Psychologically, large photos imply significance, so a photo's size in a layout should correlate with its importance. Also, the greater the size of a photo in a layout, the greater the viewer response. Varying the shape of the photo can add interest and impact to a layout, too. When the shape of a photo reinforces content, increasing the size of the photo adds even greater impact.

Space in a photo can balance the space on a page. If there is already too much space on a page, don't use a photo with a lot of space. The opposite is true for a layout with not enough space. However, the space in the photo should contribute to content, composition, or aesthetic appeal.³⁰

Conover states that a photo's internal lines and geometry influence the design of a page or spread; therefore, editors should remain aware of how these lines of force can complement or conflict with a layout. He advises that, to ensure photos are straight on a page, double-check that flat horizontal objects, such as horizon lines, floors and ceilings, are parallel with other elements on the page, including lines of type. Vertical objects such as telephone poles and tall buildings should appear at a right angle to the horizon line.³¹

Black & White or Color?

Conover states that reproducing color transparencies in black and white often results in images that are too contrasty and not as sharp as they should be.³² Therefore, when reproducing in black and white, black-and-white originals reap the best results. Gallagher, Bagin and Kindred agree that black-and-white originals reproduce more

³⁰ McDougall and Hampton 86-88.

³¹ Parker 146-147.

³² Conover 110.

clearly than color.³³ McCallum reports that when converted, shades of color seldom translate into accurate tones of gray. Light blues can become white, flesh tones turn muddy, and dark colors often appear black.³⁴

Parker states that black-and-white photographs are generally considered to be more authentic and are easier to work with than color, despite recent advances in technology. His book focuses on how to use black-and-white photographs effectively.³⁵

McDougall and Hampton, too, address how to work with black-and-white photos primarily, but recognize that color is an effective communicative tool when used intelligently. They feel that color becomes a plus only when it does not distract or compete with a photo's message and mood; therefore, color photos should be evaluated for their information content and news value in the same way as black-and-white.³⁶

In *communication briefings*, Edmund C. Arnold offers these suggestions for using color photos:

- Be sure each has a large mass of primary color — red, yellow or blue — or a light shade of a secondary color — orange, green or purple.
- Don't use those that contain mainly pastels.
- Be careful of skin tones; if they're not right in the original, don't use them.
- Don't be afraid to mix color photos with black-and-white.³⁷

³³ Donald R. Gallagher, Don Bagin and Leslie W. Kindred. *The School and Community Relations*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1997: 254.

³⁴ McCallum 149.

³⁵ Parker 138.

³⁶ McDougall and Hampton 281.

³⁷ Edmund C. Arnold, "Better Ways to Use Color." *communication briefings*, vol. 8, no. 5: 6.

One way to add color to photographs without the high cost of full-color printing is through a duotone. Here, two halftones are printed using two screens of different colors, usually black and a light shade of another color. Shadow tones are printed in the black ink, and highlights and mid-range tones in the second color. Duotones are a perfect way to make good use of spot color in a publication. According to Conover, "The duotone can enable the communicator to add color, warmth, and depth to photographs . . . to achieve a unique, artistic, interpretation that is different from the image transmitted in black and white or four-color reproductions."³⁸ Parker adds, "Duotones can provide richness to a page and can emphasize detail in a photo that otherwise might be lost."³⁹

Cropping

Conover defines *cropping* as "judicious editing with an eye toward enhancing effectiveness and design characteristics." He adds that the primary reasons for cropping are: (1) to emphasize the center of interest, (2) to eliminate the unwanted portion, (3) to compensate for technical errors, and (4) to adjust a photo's shape to fit a layout.⁴⁰ Parker adds, "Cropping is the simplest, most powerful tool for improving photographs. A good crop heightens legibility, attractiveness and impact."⁴¹

McDougall and Hampton agree that cropping can enhance a photo's message by paring away parts that divert attention from its center of interest, but add that if it is done indiscriminately, it can harm a photo's ability to communicate. They warn that "when 'where' is important in an image, severe cropping can be a mistake." They suggest that,

³⁸ Conover 135.

³⁹ Parker 177.

⁴⁰ Conover 111.

⁴¹ Parker 148.

first, editors analyze a photo to determine what parts are essential for readers to get the message quickly.⁴²

Conover offers a thorough explanation of the basic methods of scaling photographs when cropping, that is, changing the size of the original proportionately.⁴³ Gallagher, Bagin and Kindred suggest using two L-shaped pieces of cardboard to frame the area in the picture that will be retained.⁴⁴ Chadbourne illustrates how to crop manually and how to use a proportion wheel.

Because scaling and sizing photos is an important step in the production process, editors need to know what information to provide to the printer. Generally, they should submit the following information along with the original photo: (1) the desired crop dimensions, (2) the reproduction size, and (3) the scale of reduction.⁴⁵

Portraits

At some time in their careers, most public relations professionals will find themselves in a position where they either have to photograph a portrait or choose one for publication. McDougall and Hampton state that portraits are used in publications more than any other kind of photo.⁴⁶ Curl feels that a good portrait can reveal much more about the subject than merely what he or she looks like, and through careful selection of pose and lighting, a photographer can bring out the grace, poise, dignity, and character of

⁴² McDougall and Hampton 77-80.

⁴³ Conover 111-115.

⁴⁴ Gallagher, Bagin and Kindred 254.

⁴⁵ Bill N. Chadbourne, *What Every Editor Should Know About Layout and Typography*. Arlington, VA: National Composition Association: 26-27.

⁴⁶ McDougall and Hampton 99.

an individual. He discusses common problems in and offers solutions for portraiture photography, whose principles apply to photographing inanimate objects as well.⁴⁷

Peter Lien says that to make a portrait more than just a "mug shot," "get close, get to know the subject, do what comes to mind first, then shoot something totally different."

Parker suggests that when handling mug shots an editor should crop very tightly and make the individual's face the center of interest. Judicious cropping can help to reveal an individual's character and personality.⁴⁸ The eyes and mouth are good indicators of mood, but hair and forehead can also say a great deal about a person.

Profiles are a nice alternative to the mug shot and allow many opportunities for cropping. Here, the forehead, eyes, nose and mouth are the most important elements.

Chadbourne warns against running "grip-n-grin" shots — two people shaking hands with wide areas of dead space between them. He suggests cropping the recipient's head from the photo and running it alongside the story.⁴⁹ Simmons states why she avoids using grip-and-grin shots: "They say nothing . . . I might as well use a black box in the layout."

McDougall and Hampton state that the environmental portrait or the subject-with-object shot are interesting alternatives to the standard mug shot, grip-and-grin, and speaker-at-lectern-shot. However, both styles should be used in a way where the audience will easily understand the relationship between the subject and the surroundings.

The *environmental portrait* includes surroundings related to the individual in the photo. The appropriateness of the setting and the placement of the subject within the

⁴⁷ Curl 188-197.

⁴⁸ Parker 149.

⁴⁹ Chadbourne 25.

frame should occupy enough of the photo so facial features are easily recognized and the individual is not overwhelmed by the environment.

The *subject-with-object* portrait quickly establishes identity through association. The object serves as a symbol of why that person is newsworthy, so it should be easily recognizable to the viewer.⁵⁰

Both of these methods can be effective for group shots as well. In a group shot, apply creativity and avoid lining people up in what McDougall and Hampton call "pickets in a fence staring or grinning self-consciously at the camera." To make a group portrait more than just the equivalent of the mug shot, the photo should suggest why the group is together and generate interest in its activity or accomplishment.⁵¹

McDougall and Hampton also state that because portraits are so overused, they can dilute the impact of a publication. Therefore, editors should determine if running a portrait would enhance understanding or appreciation of a situation, and consider the best way to incorporate it into the layout to achieve optimum impact.

Editors must be careful not to allow prejudice or dislike to influence portrait selection. McDougall and Hampton suggest editors raise their awareness of how inadequate lighting and other manipulative techniques can produce a detrimental or unfair portrait.⁵²

The Multi-Photo Series

McDougall and Hampton provide a brief history of the multi-photo series. In a series, the total effect is greater than the sum of its parts. This method of presenting

⁵⁰ McDougall and Hampton 104-111.

⁵¹ Ibid 130.

⁵² Ibid 99.

images first became popular between 1928 and 1931 with the emergence of a postwar generation of photographers and readers who were interested in all aspects of life. Editors were discontent with static photographs, and the development of 35mm cameras, fast lenses and fast film allowed for a more documentary style of shooting — one that could tell a story in pictures with limited amount of copy.⁵³

A story told with multiple photographs will attract a large readership. Gallagher, Bagin and Kindred report that readership surveys consistently show that people like to look at pictures and prefer them to the printed word. They grasp the meaning of photos quicker than the meaning of a story, and they believe photos are more truthful than what they read.⁵⁴

Parker suggests that when running several photos on a single page or spread, one should be used as the dominant image and positioned prominently or the layout will look uninspired and confusing.⁵⁵ McDougall and Hampton compare a photo series to a simple picture story told chronologically; therefore, it should appear in the following sequence:

- The first photo should begin the action or set the scene.
- Additional photos will bring the action to a climax.
- Even more photos could show an unraveling of a situation or a denouement.
- A large, final photo can serve as a visual exclamation mark.

A portrait series is sometimes necessary to reveal the personality of a dynamic speaker. Gestures and facial animation can be emphasized, and response to a speaker or situation can be shown by adding an observer photograph.⁵⁶ The trick in both the photo story and the portrait series is to avoid redundancy of images.

⁵³ Ibid 222.

⁵⁴ Gallagher, Bagin and Kindred 205.

⁵⁵ Parker 143-44.

⁵⁶ McDougall and Hampton 120-121.

An alternative to a multi-photo series is to use a pair of similar photos. This technique is useful to illustrate situations such as before and after, then and now, day and night, or two sides of the same subject. Two adjacent photos can also create the principle of third effect; that is, together they convey a meaning entirely different from what each would if they were displayed separately. The contrast or similarities between two photos can elicit fresh insight in a viewer, but an editor must be careful that the photos, while valid alone, don't produce a lie when placed together.⁵⁷

McDougall and Hampton list several situations that may call for photo-pairing:

- To clarify or amplify a message when a single photo cannot say all that is needed about a subject.
- To enhance viewer understanding and appreciation of an attention-getting photo.
- To identify the unrecognizable due to the subject's being shot at an awkward angle or from too far a distance. The first photo can establish the situation or scene, and the second can identify the subjects.⁵⁸

Caption or Cutline?

Much confusion exists about whether to call the text that describes a photo a *caption* or a *cutline*. Chadbourne tells us that most professionals, such as editors and backshop printers, use *cutline*, but most readers use *caption*.⁵⁹ Because *caption* is more familiar to the average person, they are referred to as such in this guide. Call them what you will, but use them for every photograph in a publication. Not only do they help

⁵⁷ Ibid 184-190.

⁵⁸ Ibid 200-205.

⁵⁹ Chadbourne 22-24.

clarify the message in a photo, they also provide a capsule of information to viewers who will only glance through the piece. They may even pique interest enough to get them to read the entire story.

Captions should provide the *who, what, when, where,* and *how* of the photograph, without overstating the obvious. According to Don Bagin, research shows that readers prefer captions to appear directly below the photo.⁶⁰ Placing them below the image increases comprehension and helps readers remember the message.⁶¹ Copy should be handled in one of the following ways:

- Boldface, with the first two or three words capitalized.
- Same typeface as body copy but one or two points smaller.
- Different style typeface that harmonizes with body copy.
- With a sideline head: one or two lines of display type placed to the left of the caption.
- With a catchline (also referred to as a *lead in* or *kicker*): a "mini-headline" placed between the photo and the caption, either above and centered or flush left to line up with the caption. Catchlines do what a good headline does for a story: They capture attention and confirm or correct first impressions of a photo.

According to Conover, the style of caption should be compatible with the design of the publication and should be consistent throughout. Portraits are an exception, however. Here, one style could be used while another style is used for everything else.⁶²

⁶⁰ Dr. Donald Bagin, personal interview, June 14, 1999.

⁶¹ McCallum 152.

⁶² Conover 118.

What you say must relate to the photograph as well. McDougall and Hampton state, "The photo and caption should be a symbiotic one of mutual dependence and benefit."⁶³

Related Research for Section 3: Emerging Technologies

McDougall and Hampton state, "Technology is rapidly altering the process of getting an image from event to print, but understanding and applying visual communication principles are essential to effective message transmittal."⁶⁴ Therefore, it is more important for editors and public relations professionals to understand the basics of photography than to become familiar with every new technology that enters the market. However, the invasion of the technology age is upon us in full force, so anyone who works with publications should know something about the capabilities of available computer software and hardware.

The most informative article on photographic technology found through the author's research is "Get the Picture" by Jim Collins for *US Airways Attaché* magazine. In a nutshell, he gives the history of photographic technology, beginning with the *camera obscura* and ending with an explanation of the principles of modern digitization.⁶⁵ He comments on digital photography's growing popularity, "Increasingly, both resolution and sharpness are becoming non-issues, and digital imaging is gaining favor among photographers and in the many places photos are published."

Peter Lien predicts that in seven years or so, the quality of digital images will rival those of film.

⁶³ McDougall and Hampton 133.

⁶⁴ Ibid ix.

⁶⁵ Jim Collins, "Get the Picture." *US Airways Attaché*, January 1999: 37.

Desktop Publishing

All the experts agree with Parker's statement, "Electronic editing is no substitute for strong, original photos."⁶⁶ He lists several capabilities that designers have at their fingertips with almost every type of photo editing software: cropping, sizing, reversing direction, adjusting contrast and brightness, touching up minor problems, and adding special effects. Roger Mattingly discusses the impact of digital photography on the client-photographer relationship. He states that the greatest advantages of digitization are shorter deadlines and increased productivity.⁶⁷ Peter Lien feels the disadvantage is that, because the images show up instantly on the screen, clients tend to spend too much time on a shoot in order to fine-tune them. This demeans the expertise of the photographer and gives the client too much control over the images.

Equipment

In an article for *Fortune*, "Digital Photography Is the Next Big Thing," Stewart Alsop offers a history of desktop publishing products developed for consumer use.⁶⁸ Chris O'Malley, in an article for *Time*, discusses the advantages, disadvantages, and recent advances of digital equipment.⁶⁹ Conover discusses scanners, and explains that sheet-fed scanners are rated by their gray-scale capabilities and multi-bit scanners break down an image into dots of various sizes.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Parker 148-156.

⁶⁷ Roger Mattingly, "The Digital Imaging Facts of Life." *The Loupe*, Winter 1996. <http://www.chimwasmp.org/loupe/digfacts.html> (November 5, 1998).

⁶⁸ Stewart Alsop, "Digital Photography Is the Next Big Thing." *Fortune*, August 4, 1997. <http://www.time-webmaster@pathfinder.com> (December 28, 1998).

⁶⁹ Chris O'Malley, "Dual Focus In Cameras." *Time*, June 1, 1998, vol. 151, no. 21. <http://www.time-webmaster@pathfinder.com> (December 28, 1998).

⁷⁰ Conover 208.

Lien states that, as a storage medium, film is still the best available, both in its capabilities and its cost.

Piscopo offers hints on keeping up with the newest technology and how to determine what equipment is necessary to fulfill an organization's needs.⁷¹

Stock Photography

Stock photography is becoming even more popular and more accessible with the advent of the Internet. Graphic communicators can now download images to add to practically any type of publication. Several companies offer artwork on CD-ROM or via modem, either for a royalty or royalty-free. Lien explains the impact of the increasing availability of royalty-free clip art on photographers. He feels that clip art "devalues the assignment photographer, and will put thousands of them out of business . . . The word *exclusive* will no longer be used, but also the days of a \$5,000 photo shoot will be gone too."

Nancy J. McCarthy provides a listing of selected on-line stock photo agencies in an article for *MacWeek*.⁷²

Working With a Printer

A personal interview with Mark Pirolli offered much insight on the client/printer relationship. He emphasized that the key to a successful print job is that the in-house operator possesses the expertise required to work with photo-editing software and understands the hardware. He says, "Most people think that because an image looks good on the screen, it will reproduce that way. Once we get the image on disk or film we

⁷¹ Piscopo 1.

⁷² Nancy J. McCarthy, "Designers are Dialing Up for Stock Photo Discussion." *MacWeek*, November 28, 1994, vol. 8, no. 46: 19.

discover all sorts of problems because these people don't understand the technical implications." His preference is to receive scanned images on disk over original prints. Once an image is scanned in, it can be "tweaked."⁷³

Most media feel the same way. In a study performed by Roher Public Relations and the research firm of Leibowitz/Roher Marketing Inc., of 92 respondents, 79 percent indicated they preferred submissions as digital files generated from scans of images originally shot on film, while 23 percent preferred to receive images shot originally with a digital camera. Those queried were art directors of company publications, newspapers, and magazines.⁷⁴

Ethics

While many editors don't think to consider the responsibility they face when creating a layout, working with photographs carries a certain amount of ethical accountability. Parker reminds us to try to get written permission of photographers whose work is published and, although difficult, obtain permission of any people who appear in the photographs. And, of course, *never* portray unsuspecting people in a derogatory context.⁷⁵

As a result of emerging technologies, editors are faced with a new set of ethical concerns. In the past, photo altering was limited to the darkroom by experienced photographers. Now, practically anyone has access and the capabilities to alter images with computer software. Because editors hold the responsibility of maintaining credibility

⁷³ Mark Pirolli, personal interview, June 11, 1999.

⁷⁴ "Top Media Preferences for Using Digital Photo Files vs. Film and Prints Revealed in New Survey" (press release). Roher Public Relations, New York, NY: May 24, 1999.

⁷⁵ Parker 156.

and integrity by telling the truth in a publication's photos, they must know how to recognize dishonesty in pictures achieved through computer manipulation. Of course, ethical concerns have existed all along in the way of cropping, and lens and darkroom manipulation, but it takes an even sharper eye to discern the manipulation of pixels.

Lien states how manipulation is not confined to the computer but goes to the very core of the intention of the process: "Many photographers have set up shots in order to get a more dynamic shot. Sometimes they tell the editor; sometimes they do not. Sometime it's taken for granted, as in a photo op. Here, all parties agree to manipulation."

Sheri Rosen reports that the code of the American Society of Media Photographers places the responsibility on the photojournalist to never alter the content or meaning of a news photograph. She provides a list of acceptable and unacceptable alterations devised by the lawyers at Weyerhaeuser Co. in Washington State after a photo appeared in a company publication where a strategically placed, computer-generated bush covered the fact that one person was wearing the wrong kind of safety boots.

Rosen also reports on suggestions of New York University's Committee for New Standards for Photographic Reproduction in the Media. The committee suggests that, just as text can carry a symbol of truth like quotation marks, photos should carry a similar symbol. In the committee's proposal, a label would be placed next to every image that was significantly manipulated while still appearing to have been created by a photographic process. Unaltered images would earn a boxed circle icon, with the circle representing a camera lens; altered images would get the same icon with a slash through it. Either icon would appear just outside the left or right bottom perimeter of the image. The committee's intent is to protect the credibility of photographic documentation and the rights of citizens, who deserve to be informed honestly of the nature of the world in which they live.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Sheri Rosen, "What Is Truth?" *Communication World*, March 1995, vol. 12, no. 3: 40.

Summary

Many resources were found about digitized photography; however, because of the rapidly changing nature of the subject, primarily due to the need for improvements, only literature written about this topic after 1995 was used. Articles promoting specific products, such as software and the like, were not used. Because digital imaging is such a new area of exploration, much discussion abounds regarding the ethics of manipulated photographs and the ownership of images, especially those that appear on the Internet. Perhaps someday soon, a definitive set of guidelines will be developed for all photographers, editors, and public relations practitioners to abide by, so it is important for professionals in these fields to remain current on these topics. Until then, publishers and editors should look toward their inner selves and act with integrity in an effort to maintain the credibility and honor of all others in the public relations profession.

Chapter IV: The Guide

Introduction

Just as the printing process has changed tremendously since the invention of Gutenberg's printing press in the 1450's, so has the process of photography. From the *camera obscura* of the Renaissance, to the box cameras of the 19th century, to the single lens reflex cameras of the 20th century, and into the digital age of the 21st century, photography has seen its share of innovations.

Since the arrival of photography as we know it in 1839 and the invention of the first single reflex camera in 1934, the medium has evolved at a relatively slow pace. While cameras continued to advance with interchangeable lenses, self-timers, auto-focus and auto-exposure, the fundamental techniques of taking and processing photos changed remarkably little until the advent of the digital age in the 1990's.

Technological advancements aside, the elements of effective visuals remain constant. In fact, because of sophisticated techniques, editors and other public relations professionals who use photographs in publications have little excuse for publishing images of poor quality. The only plausible reason for doing so is the lack of knowing the difference between a good photograph and an inadequate one. The ability to recognize meaningful composition, determine proper exposure and crop effectively are essential skills for any editor who wants to attract attention, increase readership and evoke an emotional response through the use of photographs. This guidebook describes these and other essential areas a public relations professional should know about the practice of using photographs effectively.

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"Filmed as Bound"

Section 1: Photographic Technique

Photography is an art. But it's a medium whose success depends not only on the talent of the artist, but on the understanding of the technology involved. Film stock, lens speed, camera format, chemistry — the basics of photography — are important to whoever is producing the picture. Because editors and public relations professionals are most often concerned with what to do with a photo once they have it in hand, this guide does not go into detail on equipment and chemistry.

Anyone who works with photographs should be familiar with the basics of how to take and process a photo. But, to public relations professionals, more important than knowing what type of film was used for a shot is knowing how to recognize that the *right* film was used for the job. Particulars such as film speed and aperture settings should be left to the photographers to know. What every editor should know, instinctively, is how to recognize a good shot — in other words, how to *see* and how to *visualize*.

Evaluating Technical Quality

According to Parker , "A good photograph stands apart from the rest because it 'feels right' and 'looks good.' It captures our attention, conveys emotion and tells a story." A good photo combines the artistic and the technical and fulfills four common requirements:

Focus: a picture must be in proper focus or it will look unprofessional. Only use fuzzy, vague or blurry photos when striving for a particular effect. For public relations purposes, those occasions will be rare.

Clarity: Photos must not appear overly grainy. That is, the granular texture of an image, which is typically visible only through magnification, should not be apparent. Overexposure or extreme enlarging of a negative will result in a grainy image.

Contrast: Contrast must be balanced. Too much makes whites too light and blacks too dark; not enough makes the entire image seem gray and washed out.

Brightness: The overall photo should not be too dark or too light, regardless of subject matter (also referred to as *luminance*).

Making photographs can be a thrilling, satisfying experience. It can also be tedious, arduous, and frustrating at times. An editor who has never developed film or made a print should spend some time with photographers and watch each step. Knowing the time and skill required to make a quality photograph will enable editors to appreciate the process and, in turn, set realistic deadlines, get better pictures, and improve the morale of all involved.

Editors should also be familiar with manipulation methods, both with the camera and in the darkroom, that can be used to distort the truth. Some important points are:

- Depth of field is determined by the focal length, aperture and camera-to-subject distance. Understanding this principle can help evaluate figure-ground relationships in a photo.
- Telephoto and wide-angle lenses can distort reality. An editor should be able to recognize lens effects and how they can mislead the viewer.
- Darkroom techniques are commonly used to correct the exposure of a print, but they can also be used to distort reality. The only justification for using the following techniques is to clear up background clutter that interferes with the photo's message and improve the quality of a print, not to change the message of a photo.

Bleaching: applying chemicals to a finished print to remove unwanted portions of the image. The most commonly used bleach is ferricyanide, commercially known as "Farmer's Reducer."

Dodging: blocking exposure of light to an area of a print to lighten the area. It is commonly used to reveal details in an overly dark area, but it can be used to completely eliminate elements in a photo.

Burning: darkening an area of a print by allowing more light to reach it. Burning is commonly used to darken areas that include lights or sunlight glare, but extreme darkening can remove elements.

Retouching: eliminating unwanted material or flaws in a print through (1) airbrushing, using an atomizer and compressed air to spray watercolor paint on an image to change its appearance; or (2) spotting, using a brush to apply a special dye to remove scratches and dust, and to darken small areas such as bright lights and reflection.

Some tell-tale signs of darkroom manipulation are halos and sharp demarcations between light and dark areas. Knowing how to recognize the signs and understanding the techniques used will enable an editor to detect and discourage overzealous and intentional tampering with a photo's reality.

Composition

McDougall and Hampton describe composition as the "architectural design of a photograph." How effectively a photo conveys its message is evaluated on how well composition enhances content.

A good photographer will apply the rules of effective composition instinctively, but, as Davis says, "if they followed these rules religiously, there would be little chance for personal expression and picture-taking would become a simple matter of following instructions." Nonetheless, rules exist for a reason, and anyone responsible for choosing photos for publications should know them. The basic rules are:

- (1) Have a single, dominant center of interest.

- (2) Follow the “rule of thirds”: Place the center of interest away from the center of the picture.
- (3) Place a horizon level according to the rule of thirds. Don’t use it to divide a picture into two equal halves.
- (4) Don't allow important tones or textures in your main subject to merge with the background.
- (5) Keep extraneous elements out of the picture.
- (6) Don't amputate parts of the main subject at awkward places.
- (7) Don't allow objects in the background to "grow out" of an individual's body.
Be aware of trees, telephone poles and other objects in the background.
- (8) Avoid distracting shapes at the very edges of a photograph.
- (9) Have the main subject facing or moving into the frame, not out of it.
- (10) Frame the main subject with a complementary foreground object.
- (11) Use leading lines to direct viewer's attention, such as S curves and convergence.
- (12) Use strong diagonal lines to imply action or conflict.
- (13) Compose vertically to emphasize height and dignity.
- (14) Compose horizontally to suggest peace and rest.

Effective composition is also evaluated by how well the elements in the picture help to convey a message and enhance content through the arrangement of form, lines, tone, space, texture, rhythm, and scale.

Form is the basic underlying shape of composition. When evident to the viewer and when repeated with variation, it can be very effective.

Lines define shapes and boundaries. They indicate direction, distance and depth. They can transmit impressions of action and energy, and they help to create a mood and feeling. They provide pathways for the eye to follow to the center of interest.

Tone is the overall lightness or darkness of a photo. Whether in shades of gray or in color, tones can be contrasted or harmonized, depending on the desired effect.

Space determines movement in a photograph. When there is more space in front of a subject, the subject is perceived to be moving into the photo. This presents a visually positive and dynamic image, as opposed to having too much space behind the subject, which makes it appear to move out of a photo. Positive space helps convey a message or it gives a feeling for space when space itself is the message; negative space separates objects that have a close relationship.

Texture is roughness or smoothness that the eyes can “feel,” such as sand or silk.

Rhythm is achieved by repeated patterns of line and form in an image. They can be interesting in and of themselves, but they are often more exciting when the pattern is varied by one single item that is different from the rest in size, shape, value, texture, or direction.

Scale is the inclusion of an object of known size that can be used as a yardstick to judge the size of an unknown object or an area. An effective unit of measurement is the human figure because we tend to make comparisons in terms of human dimensions. A human figure next to a very large object can demonstrate the object’s enormity; hands and fingers can provide scale to a very small object. When illustrating scale, the larger the photograph, the greater the impact.

Taking the Picture

A good photographer has an eye for where to point the lens and when to click the shutter to capture images that both convey emotion and tell a story. To make a photograph effective, it should include these common elements:

- **A decisive moment.** Any shot of a person or an event should suggest to the viewer that that moment was the optimum time to snap the shutter.

- **Emotional content.** If an image is devoid of feeling, it will not evoke a strong response. Even photos of the most impersonal items can be loaded with suggested meaning through use of lighting, placement, and the like.
- **Powerful visual imagery.** The underlying geometry, tone and composition of an image can make the difference between a mediocre shot and a great one.
- **Strong cropping and framing.** Information can always be taken away from an original image, but it cannot be added. Frame enough information to allow cropping for effect later.

Public relations professionals without much picture-taking experience may suddenly find themselves responsible for shooting their own photos. In the event this happens, keep the following tips in mind:

- Lighting should be even, without extreme highlights or shadows.
- Dark shadows do not print well on coarse paper.
- Outdoor photographs reproduce best if taken in mid-afternoon, the evenly lit hours of the day.
- If reproducing on smooth, glossy paper, include some shadows.
- Light- and medium-colored subjects turn out best when shot against a dark background.
- A dark subject is best photographed against a moderately light background. Don't make it too light or it may merge into the page it is printed on.
- If a photo contains dark and light subjects, select a mid-tone background that contrasts well with both.
- Photograph the subject from every possible angle. Oftentimes, the "afterthought" photos will end up being the ones published.
- Be sure to shoot several different exposures of the same shot, then select the one best suited to your purpose, paper and printing method.

Try framing the subject in many different ways: shoot it in its entirety or only a part; be selective in its surroundings or inclusive. Remember that a photo's message can be sharpened later through cropping, once you decide what part of the frame should be left in or out, so it's best to include too much information rather than not enough.

The camera's viewpoint can alter the message you want to send or affect a viewer's attitude. Shoot the subject from left and right, above and below, and behind and broadside. Looking down on someone can be condescending; looking up can make someone appear impressive or bigger than life. Shooting at the same level of the subject can create a sense of intimacy.

The arrangement of elements is also significant to the message. Try juxtaposing elements in typical or atypical fashion, shooting them as still lifes or showing action, or lighting them from the front, back and side. Pay particular attention to the background: Background can give a sense of place, but if it's confusing or cluttered it produces visual static that interferes with the message. Try a few humorous shots, too, but work to make them appear natural, not planned or set up. The more variations you try in the shoot will give you a greater chance for success when it comes time to selecting an effective photo for your publication.

Lighting

There is light, and then there is light. It exists in a variety of forms, and it's one of the most crucial elements in the picture-taking process. After all, the word *photography* means, literally, "writing with light." The quality of light in a scene can have a profound influence on the effectiveness of a picture. According to Davis, "If you use light effectively, your pictures will attract attention and admiration; if you ignore light, be prepared to have your photographs ignored, too."

Proper use of lighting in a photograph may make the difference between a natural-looking image or one that seems contrived. Light can make a scene appear bright and

happy; its absence can make it seem dark and sad. Because the viewer's eye tends to go to the lightest part of a picture first, adding light to one part of a subject can draw attention to that area, especially when it contrasts with a darker background.

The easiest and most common way to light a subject is with an electronic on-camera flash. These can be very sophisticated in their technology; however, they all produce the same results. They are fine to use as "fill" flash to add light to unwanted shadows in natural light, but when they are used as the only light source they can make your subject appear flat and shapeless. And if the subject is too close to a wall or other light, flat object, you'll get distractingly dark shadows.

A good alternative to lighting an object straight on is to use a bounce flash. Here, the light bounces off other objects, usually a ceiling, and falls onto the subject. This produces softer shadows and spreads the light out more evenly so you avoid getting a very bright foreground on a very dark background.

Using off-camera artificial lighting produces better results but takes more time, thought and experience. Usually, two lights are necessary, a main, or "key" light that provides illumination to the subject and a secondary light that is used to even out the highlights and shadows, reducing harshness and adding form and depth to an image. When used in a studio or other room, light from the key source bounces off the walls and ceiling to flood the subject with soft, indirect light that provides uniform intensity. Adding a second light works on the same principle as fill flash to eliminate dark shadows and reduce contrast. This principle can be applied in places where walls and ceilings are not available; instead, use a large piece of foam core or other white material to bounce the light onto the subject.

Outdoors, use a reflector to direct sunlight onto the subject. This will give your images a natural appearance. Again, a piece of foam core, a light-colored umbrella, or a large piece of white material will work.

Variation Through the Lens

For a 35mm camera, a 50mm lens is the standard because its focal length approximates characteristics of the human eye. Anything shorter than 35mm is considered a *wide-angle* lens. These are good for use in low light situations because they let more light in, and focusing is not critical because of greater depth of field. When misused, however, they can distort reality by creating misleading impressions of size and space relationships. They can expand the space between figure and ground, and they can magnify foreground objects and diminish background.

Telephoto lenses are 85mm and longer and replicate binoculars in their ability to get closer to a subject. They work in the opposite manner of wide-angle lenses: they compress space and make elements seem closer to one another. They can distort reality by exaggerating conditions such as traffic congestion, but they're helpful in situations such as sporting events where the photographer cannot get in close to a subject.

Do not use anything less than a 50mm lens for portraits because these can distort facial characteristics, oftentimes resulting in a very unflattering portrayal of the subject. The best lens for portraits is a 135mm, even when getting in close is not an issue.

Section 2: Using Photographs in Publications

Photography can be a powerful tool for sending a message. According to David Curl, it's "the closest thing we have to a universal medium of communication." It makes sense then, especially for public relations professionals, to take advantage of the power of photographs whenever possible.

According to Marken, public relations professionals should use photos in their publications for three reasons: (1) they communicate quickly, (2) they create excitement without easily recognizable bias, and (3) they offer graphic proof of intangibles such as market acceptance, product leadership, high quality, and dynamic management. Brian McCallum reports that a nine-year study conducted by Eastman Research found that in business publications, pictures ranked highest in readership. Research also shows that 80 percent of readers enter a page through a photograph rather than a headline. The visual attracts attention and piques interest, and often prompts the viewer to read the accompanying text. Parker reports that numerous studies have shown that readers are more likely to believe a story if it features a photo.

Determining the Message

The first step in choosing a photograph for publication is evaluating the message you want to send. To get a message across effectively, you have to understand the psychology of your audience: how people perceive themselves determines how they will relate to what you have to say. For example, your photographs can impart a feeling of luxuriousness, friendliness, importance, or whatever mood you feel your audience will relate to, whether you're depicting an individual, a product, a situation, or a location.

Once you determine the message you want to send, visualize how photographs will work best to send the message. An editor should have a clear idea of how a photograph will relate to the accompanying copy and how it will be presented. Once this

is determined, decide how to obtain the photograph. If you take it yourself, you'll know exactly what you're after; if you send someone else out to get the shot, it's important to communicate your vision.

Working With a Photographer

Before signing an agreement with a photographer for hire, study the quality and creativity of his or her work and review the individual's portfolio to see if it includes similar images to the ones you hope to obtain.

Communicating your vision to someone else is often difficult, so it's important to be thorough in your explanation of what you expect from a shoot and to plan it thoroughly. According to Marken, "Advance planning makes the difference between simply doing your job and getting dramatic coverage and results for your company or client." Providing the following information beforehand will help make the photographer's job easier and increase the chances of success.

- Write out all the specifics for the assignment: date, reporting time, location, subject, objective, expected duration of the assignment, and the names of any contact people.
- Make sure the photographer understands the message you intend to send through use of the photographs.
- Communicate the "look and feel" you're trying to achieve, but encourage creativity and experimentation on the photographer's part. An experienced photographer knows how to execute a photograph, and should be able to determine what will and will not work. Listening to others' ideas may result in a better photo than you ever imagined.
- Provide a description of the environment, that is, indoor or outdoor, available lighting, room restrictions, props involved and who will be responsible for them. This will help the photographer plan what equipment will be necessary.

- Determine if you want color, black-and-white, or both.
- Relay the size of print you will order and the space it will fill in your publication, if known. Provide back issues of your publication to the photographer to give an idea of format restrictions.
- Decide what format film to use. The most common is 35mm, but if the print will be used in a larger area, you might wish to order 2 1/4 x 2 1/4. Remember that the larger the film format, the sharper the photo. The size of the print should be as close to the size of the reproduction because excessive enlarging often results in a grainy and sometimes blurred image. If you plan to enlarge to 8 1/2 x 11 or greater, order an 8 x 10 print.

When you assign a job to a photographer, keep the reader in mind. Determine what kind of shot will best tell the story, what will look natural and unposed, and what will attract the attention of the 3- or 30-second reader.

Value the photographer's expertise and pay the individual a fair rate. Expect the photographer to "get the shot" and nothing else. Be sure to designate responsibility to someone else to oversee the assignment and handle "red tape" such as securing permissions and booking locations. Treating the photographer as a professional will invariably help to build a trustful, honest relationship.

Photo Selection

According to Roger Parker, author of *Looking Good in Print*, "Half the battle of producing professional, attractive layouts is making sure you pick the best shots possible. A good photograph will stand apart from the rest because it 'feels good' and 'looks good.'" An editor should look for action, natural poses and the unexpected during the photo-selection process.

Before deciding to use a photograph in a publication, consider how it would serve to communicate your message. Editors should ask the following questions during the selection process to determine if a photo is worth publishing:

- Is the photograph informative?
- Will it be of interest to viewers?
- Does it reinforce the message?
- What words are needed to strengthen the message?
- Is it of reproduction quality?
- Will cropping improve the content or composition?
- What is the minimum reproduction size for readability?
- Will one photo say enough or would more be better?
- How should it be incorporated into the layout to best convey the message?

If you can't answer these questions satisfactorily, don't waste space by running the photo. And don't publish a photo if there is a chance that it may be offensive to readers. To maintain ethics of an organization, an editor must be aware of a community's mores and concerns. Avoid embarrassing your subjects, and don't portray unsuspecting people in a derogatory context. If a subject's actions are ambiguous, use a strong, clear caption. A good test for editors is to ask themselves how they would feel if it were them pictured in the photo.

Although difficult, it's best to get permission of any people who appear in the photos you publish. And if you plan to use someone else's photo, you should get written permission first. Not doing so may present legal ramifications later on.

The Psychology of Visual Perception

Understanding how the eyes and brain process visual stimuli can make editors better communicators and can make the process of photo selection easier. Researchers Zakia and Weber have led the way in exploring the relationship between photography and

Gestalt, the grouping of visual elements into a single form. For example, when we look at a portrait, we don't perceive the nose, mouth and eyes as separate entities, but as a complete person. Zakia and Weber explain how our mind distinguishes what is most important in an image:

All visible shapes possess at least two distinguishable aspects called *figure* and *ground*. When we look at a photograph, we instantly select an object which becomes *figure* (that which catches our attention). The surroundings then become *ground* which may be foreground and background . . . this selection is made in as little as 1/100 of a second.

What becomes figure depends on the characteristics of the photo and the knowledge, interests, and cultural background of the viewer.

Because figure and ground cannot be perceived simultaneously, editors must make sure they do not compete for attention. Otherwise, the message will be unclear to the viewer. Therefore, it makes sense to keep photos as simple as possible.

Editors should be aware of how depth of field can affect the figure-ground relationship. When depth of field creates a sharply focused foreground and background, the visual elements in those areas may divert attention from the intended figure. An out-of-focus background creates the strongest contrast between figure and ground, but it can also be an annoyance and weaken impact. To communicate a message successfully, figure must stand out clearly in contrast to the background. Richard Zakia summarizes the characteristics of the figure-ground relationship as follows:

- Figure is usually smaller than ground.
- Figure appears to have a boundary; ground does not.
- Figure has a stronger shape than ground.
- Figure usually appears closer than ground even if both are in the same plane.

A photographer can use focus, composition, lighting, perspective and darkroom control of contrast to create a center of interest that distinctly stands out from its background.

Oftentimes, a photographer will see a relationship between the subject and an object in the background that will reinforce the message or create humor, then captures it on film. An editor should look for these types of relationships in the selection process.

Layout

Competition will always exist for space in a layout between the visual and verbal elements, but editors should remember that photos capture attention and increase readership of the stories they accompany. When used with diversity and creativity, they add great appeal.

When planning a layout, consider the size and shapes of the photographs you want to include. Give careful thought to the importance of the photos and don't use them simply as arbitrary hole fillers. Some photographs are so important to your message that the other page elements can be built around them. Common ways to compromise a photo's quality are:

- using it as a divider of two side-by-side headlines,
- sizing it to fit perfectly into a column of type, and
- including non-essential areas of the photo so it fills up space.

Every photograph has its own internal lines and geometry that influence the design of a page or spread. Be aware of how a photo's lines of force can complement or conflict with a layout. For example, if a person in a photo is gesturing in a certain direction, the viewer's eye will be led in that direction. Using this gesture wisely will lead the viewer's eye to important information on the page.

Be aware of a photo's inherent sense of direction and balance, too. To ensure that a photo is straight in a layout, make sure the flat horizontal elements in the image, such as

the horizon, floor or ceiling, are parallel with the other horizontal elements on a page, including the lines of type. Objects such as telephone poles and tall buildings should appear at a right angle to the horizon line.

The greater the size of the photo in a layout, the greater the viewer response. Psychologically, large photos imply significance, but make sure they are worthy of their size. Size should be decided by what the photo says, how well it says it, and the importance of the story.

Varying the shape of photo on a page can add interest and impact to a layout and give it a fresh look. When a narrow horizontal or vertical shape is appropriate to the subject in the photo, it will attract more attention than a conventional rectangle. When the shape of the photo reinforces the content, increasing the size of the photo adds even greater impact.

Positive or negative space in a photo can be functional to a layout also. Compare and contrast the amount of space on a page with that of the photo. If there is already too much space on the page, don't use much in the photo. The opposite is true for a layout with not enough space. However, make sure the space in the photo contributes to content, composition, or aesthetic appeal.

Color vs. Black & White

The time to think about how the photo will be reproduced is in the planning stage. It's important to know beforehand whether the photo will be reproduced in black and white or in color and then order the correct prints for the job. Some significant differences between the two are:

- Black-and-white photos are generally considered to be more "real."
- Despite advances in technology, it's still easier to work with black and white.

More contrast is obtained in color photography even though the tone of the subject and background are similar. Add to this the fact that when color originals are

reproduced in black and white, they often appear more contrasty and not as sharp and clear as they should be. When converted, shades of color seldom translate into accurate tones of gray. Light blues can become white, flesh tones turn muddy, and dark colors often appear black. It makes sense, then, to use black-and-white originals when reproducing in black and white.

Color can be an effective communicative tool when used intelligently, that is, when it does not distract or compete with a photo's message and mood. Editors should evaluate color photos for their information content and news value in the same way as black and white and heed the following tips as suggested by Edmund C. Arnold:

- Be sure each has a large mass of primary color — red, yellow or blue — or a light shade of a secondary color — orange, green or purple.
- Don't use those that contain mainly pastels.
- Be careful of skin tones; if they're not right in the original, don't use them.
- Don't be afraid to mix color photos with black-and-white.

One way to add color to photographs without the high cost of full-color printing is through a duotone. Here, two halftones are printed using two screens of different colors, usually black and a light shade of another color. Shadow tones are printed in the black ink, and highlights and mid-range tones in the second color.

Reproducing a photograph as a duotone can add a different perspective to an image. Besides color, duotones add warmth and depth to photographs and emphasize detail that might otherwise be lost. They add richness to a layout and will achieve a more artistic interpretation than an image reproduced in black and white or in full color.

Cropping

Conover defines cropping as "judicious editing with an eye toward enhancing effectiveness and design characteristics." The most common reasons to crop a photo are (1) to emphasize the center of interest, (2) to eliminate flaws or unnecessary or distracting

elements, and (3) to adjust a photo's size to fit a layout. Parker adds that cropping serves a greater purpose: "Cropping is the simplest, most powerful tool for improving photos."

Good cropping heightens legibility, improves aesthetics, and adds impact.

Cropping can also be used to improve the composition of a photograph.

Remember the rule of thirds: Through cropping, a horizon line can be raised or lowered to change the emphasis, or the center of interest of the image may be moved to a better location. Cropping can also act as a zoom lens to bring a subject in closer, especially with portraits.

Cropping should be used to remove non-essential windows and lights in an image, since viewers tend to look at the brightest areas of a photo first. It should also be used to remove people whose expressions, gestures or dress compete with the center of interest. Be careful, however, not to manipulate the meaning of a photo by cropping people and altering the relationship of those who remain.

In a well-cropped photo, everything within the crop marks is essential to its message; however, avoid overzealousness and do not treat cropping as a necessary task. An editor should remain objective when cropping and keep in mind that although he or she knows what is outside the crop marks, the viewer might be shortchanged without the same information. When "where" is important in an image, severe cropping can be a mistake. Remember: If a message is clear, hands off.

Some handy tools to help crop and size a print are:

(1) Cropping L's: Make two right angles out of heavy paper or cardboard. The "L's" should be 8-10 inches long and about 1 1/2 inches wide. Frame the print with the L's, moving them in and out proportionately until you reach the point where you're satisfied with what's shown. Then mark the crop lines in the margins of the print.

(2) The proportional scale: This works on the same premise as cropping L's only better, since its "L's" are actual rulers. Immediately, you'll know the dimensions of the finished image. These can be purchased at most art supply stores.

(3) The proportion wheel: This device can be used to size art and calculate the percentage of enlargement or reduction. Here's how it works: Say the cropped area of your original is 7½ inches wide and 4 inches deep. You want to fit it in a space that is 4 inches wide. You need to find how deep the photo will be once its width is reduced to 4 inches. On the inside ring of the wheel, find the mark for 7½" ("size of original"). Then, align the mark with 4" on the outside ring ("reproduction size"). You'll find the size of the depth of the reduced image along the inner circle next to 4". The reduced image will be 2 1/8 inches deep. An inner window on the wheel will show you the percentage of reduction of the original. In this case, to reproduce the 7½ x 4 image at 4 x 2 1/8, the wheel shows that it must be reduced 53 percent. The same procedure is used to enlarge an image as well. Although it may seem complicated, the proportion wheel is really a very simple tool to use. You should be able to find one at any art supply house.

When sending a cropped photo to a printer, be sure to attach the crop dimensions of the original, the reproduction size, and the scale of reduction.

Portraits

According to McDougall and Hampton, portraits are used in publications more than any other kind of photo. Portraits are essential; people like to see whom they're reading about. However, too many editors resort to the "mug shot" as a banal, overused method to break up copy. If editors invested more thought in portraiture, they could add creativity and interest to their publications.

Editors who are sophisticated in visual communication avoid using formal studio portraits because they are so obviously posed. Informal, candid portraits, taken while the subject is working or engaged in conversation, are much more believable and tell more about an individual. Depending on what you want viewers to know about a person, anything from the face to the entire body may be included. Photographer Peter Lien

suggests that when shooting portraits, get in close and get to know the subject. For diversity, first shoot what comes to mind, then shoot something totally different.

Reader interest in any photo increases as its size increases, and this applies to portraits as well. However, if you find you must reproduce a portrait in a small size, crop it tightly so the subject's face takes center stage. Before cropping any portrait, consider the most significant aspects of the shot in revealing an individual's character and personality. The eyes and mouth are good indicators of mood, but hair and forehead can also say a lot about a person. Only crop those facial features that distract.

Profiles are a nice substitution for the mug shot and allow many opportunities for cropping. The space behind the cheekbone, toward the ear and the back of the head usually are non-essential in a profile. The forehead, eyes, nose, mouth and chin are the important elements.

When cropping a portrait from a non-portrait image, pay close attention to the subject's facial expression and gestures. If taken out of context, these may be misinterpreted. On the other hand, if the background does not add information about the subject, it can waste valuable space in a layout. If possible, tell a photographer beforehand the space a portrait will fill, but make sure to get several variations.

Don't resort to portraiture clichés such as the speaker-at-lectern shot or the "grip-n-grin" shot — a hand-shake shot with wide areas of dead space in the center. They are a waste of valuable space and say nothing important about an individual. Instead, crop the recipient's head out of the photo and run the head shot with the story alongside. An even better alternative would be to run an environmental or subject-with-object portrait.

The **Environmental Portrait** includes surroundings related to the individual in the photo. Viewers will understand and appreciate subjects more fully when viewing them in a setting associated with their lifestyle, workplace, avocation or whatever makes them newsworthy. To capture an effective environmental photo, full cooperation of the subject is essential. The better the photographer communicates what he or she is trying to

achieve, the greater the chance for success. Another factor to success is the appropriateness of the setting and the placement of the subject within the frame. The subject should occupy enough of the photo so facial features are easily recognized and he or she is not overwhelmed by the environment.

The **Subject-With-Object** portrait is a shorthand way of communicating the nature of the relationship between the two, and it quickly establishes identity through association. Pose a subject with an object that serves as a symbol of why that person is newsworthy and, to be successful, the significance of the object to the subject should be easily recognizable. If the object is unfamiliar to the average reader, explain it in the accompanying text without being offensive to those who already know. It's best to state the connection of the object to the subject or reveal the importance of the two in case viewers don't "get it." A good photographer will avoid clichés and use creativity to capture the subject and object in an original way. For example, a musician playing an instrument can be trite, not interpretive. The challenge is to connect a person to an object in an interesting way while maintaining validity.

The environmental and subject-with-object portraits can be effective alternatives for group shots, too. Whenever a group assembles for the sole purpose of having its picture taken, it's almost certain the result will be boring. Avoid lining up people in what McDougall and Hampton call "pickets in a fence staring or grinning self-consciously at the camera." To make a group portrait more than just the equivalent of the mug shot, the photo should suggest why the group is together and generate interest in its activity or accomplishment.

Because portraits are so overused, they can dilute the impact of a publication and/or waste valuable space. To help decide whether or not to use a portrait, an editor should determine if it would enhance the understanding or appreciation of a situation and consider the best way to handle it to achieve optimum impact in a layout. Sometimes it's more effective to print one large portrait in the space that two would normally occupy.

Whatever style you use, your subjects will be thankful if you make their portraits as flattering, or at least as realistic, as possible. An editor has an ethical responsibility to not allow prejudice or dislike to influence portrait selection. Be aware of how a detrimental or unfair portrait can be produced easily through camera and darkroom techniques or inadequate lighting.

The Multi-Photo Series

Sometimes it is necessary to use a series of images to achieve a certain effect. A series can tell a story. It can portray a sense of time and motion when the photos are shown in sequence. Running several similar photos, shot quickly from the same angle, in sequence can impart a sense of movement to the viewer. If nothing else, a series can add a lift to a mundane photo situation through the variation of images, sizing, cropping and placement.

In a photo series, the total effect is greater than the sum of its parts. They first became popular in Europe between 1928 and 1931 with the emergence of a postwar generation of photographers and readers who were interested in all aspects of life. Editors were discontent with static photographs, and the development of 35mm cameras, fast lenses and fast film lent the art to a more documentary style. Their popularity endures even more today in our graphics-oriented society.

A story told with multiple photographs will attract large readership. Readership surveys consistently show that people like to look at pictures and prefer them to the printed word. Readers grasp the meaning of photos quicker than the meaning of a story, and they believe photos are more truthful than what they read. A collection of action shots with a small amount of copy can be an interesting substitution for a lengthy article, but be sure to include captions to communicate the points you want your readers to know. Make sure the relationship between photos and text is clear to readers upon first glance.

Don't direct readers to photos through the captions, or make them refer back to the caption for each image.

A photo series should have all the characteristics of a simple picture story told chronologically. The first photo should begin the action or set the scene. Then, one or more photos will bring the action to a climax. Even more photos could show an unraveling of a situation as in a structured short story. Or, add excitement by ending the series with a large final photo that can serve as a visual exclamation mark. The photos can be arranged in either horizontal or vertical succession, but an editor must determine the most natural way to lead the reader to culmination in the final photo. To reinforce the relationship between the photos, the space between them should not be too great. An editor's greatest challenge when putting together a photo series is to select just enough images and place them in an order where they will build quickly to a climax without being redundant.

Occasionally, a series of portraits will be necessary to reveal the personality of a dynamic emotional subject, especially if the portraits are shot during conversation, an interview or a speech. To make the series interesting, make sure the images show facial expression and various gestures. Emphasize animation whenever possible. Lay out the portrait series in sequential order to present a cumulative effect, since its purpose is to interpret a subject's personality and depict emotion rather than to show developing action or tell a story. Again, don't be redundant by publishing photos that are too similar; instead opt for a few larger photos if you have space to fill, and if the photos warrant it. To add variety, show response to a situation by adding an observer photograph, such as the expression of a listener responding to a dynamic speaker.

When running several related photos on a single page or spread, choose one as the dominant image and position it prominently or the series will look uninspired and confusing. Vary the size of the photos to add emphasis and diversity.

An alternative to a multi-photo series is to use paired photos, or two photos that show similarities in different subjects or differences in similar subjects. This technique is useful to illustrate common comparisons such as before and after, then and now, day and night, or two sides of the same subject. The effectiveness of paired photos can be enhanced by similar cropping, sizing and display to give each equal importance.

Sometimes, two adjacent photos can convey a meaning entirely different from what each would if they were displayed separately. This technique, known as the principle of third effect, was first used in a magazine published by a Berlin art dealer in the 1920's and was quickly adopted by many picture magazines that were becoming popular in Germany and England. The contrast or similarities between the photos can produce an editorial statement different from the originals. Third-effect pairing can elicit fresh insight in a viewer, but be careful that the two photos, while valid alone, don't produce a lie when placed together. Third-effect pairing can often be humorous: animals and people that look alike in similar poses, fruits or vegetables that resemble people or other objects, or an implied response of a subject to the action taking place in the adjacent photo. Use this type of humor with discretion, however, and be careful not to embarrass or hurt anyone.

McDougall and Hampton present some situations that may call for photo-pairing. In all cases, the decision to use two photos instead of one should be based on the contribution each makes to the other.

- To clarify or amplify a message when a single photo cannot say all that is needed about a subject.
- Where a second photo augments an attention-getting photo to enhance viewer understanding and appreciation.
- To identify the unrecognizable due to the subject being shot at an awkward angle or from too far a distance. The first photo can establish the situation or scene and the second can identify the subjects.

While visual impact generally increases as a photo's size increases, in a multi-photo series, the relationship of the size of the overall package to the size of the photos is the influential factor.

Captions

Much confusion exists about what to call the run-around text that accompanies a photo. Is it a *caption* or a *cutline*? There are no absolute guidelines but, typically, newspaper people use *cutline* and magazine editors, as well as most readers, use *caption*. Because most people are more comfortable with *caption*, that's what they will be referred to here. Call them what you will, but use them for every photograph in a publication.

Captions are necessary to say what your photographs cannot and to clarify any possible misconceptions of what is happening in the photograph. A good caption will cover the essentials but will be brief enough to remain interesting. Don't describe the obvious; tell people what they cannot see for themselves. Provide information not apparent in the picture such as sounds, odors, time, size or space relationships. Pointing out details that may be overlooked in casual viewing can pull readers back into a photo for a second look and help them perceive more than they would without an explanation.

The style of caption used should be compatible with the design of the entire publication. Arrangement and placement should not be "thrown in" but should be treated as an important element to the overall design. Captions may be handled in any one of several ways:

- Boldface, with the first two or three words capitalized.
- Same typeface as body copy but one or two points smaller.
- Different style typeface that harmonizes with body copy.
- With a sideline head: one or two lines of display type placed to the left of the caption.

- With a catchline: a "mini-headline" placed between the photo and the caption, either above and centered or flush left to line up with the caption. Catchlines accomplish what a good headline does for a story: they capture attention and confirm or correct first impressions of a photo.

Consistency throughout a publication is important; however, using one style for head shots and another for every other photo is acceptable. A caption can help to add interest to a head shot if you follow the person's name with an identifier or quote that characterizes that person. For example, Jane Doe: woman with a cause. For large groups, the emphasis of the caption should be on the role of the group rather than on individuals. While names are almost always an essential complement to a photo, identifying only key individuals in large groups may be sufficient.

According to McDougall, "The photo and caption should be a symbiotic one of mutual dependence and benefit." The tone of the writing should match the mood of the photo or the credibility of your publication will suffer. For example, don't use a smiling face to accompany a caption that describes a tragedy.

Research shows that readers prefer captions to appear directly below a photograph. The psychology of perception and common human conditioning causes viewers to look down from a photo after scanning it to double-check their perception of the image. If a story accompanies a photo, place the headline and text directly beneath the photo. If the headline relates, the viewer will be drawn into the story. Occasionally, an editor will find it necessary to place a caption adjacent to a photo or to use one caption to describe several related photos. While this is not the most effective use of captions, it does add diversity to a layout.

Captions should be written in news style and include the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why* and *how* of the intended message. The major difference between captions and body copy is that captions are most often written in present tense to imply immediacy. A photo

freezes action of the past, but the words give the illusion of seeing the scene take place before the reader's eyes.

Just as a photo can be a cliché, so can a caption. When explaining an activity, use action verbs, but avoid "canned" words such as *discussing, planning, admiring, pictured here*, and so on.

Don't write or place captions in a way that confuses the reader, and don't clutter your caption with numbers, arrows and other devices that clutter and disfigure a layout. Follow the same rules of readability for captions as for body copy in line length, typeface, spacing and so on. For line length, follow these general guidelines:

- For photos up to four inches wide, set captions in single lines the same width of the photo.
- For photos four to seven inches wide, set captions in two columns, or "legs."
- For photos greater than seven inches wide, set captions in three "legs."

For photo credits, placing them at the bottom right-hand corner is more appealing than adding them to the end of the caption. Occasionally, they run parallel along the right side of the photo. A credit line can be as small as six-point type and still be legible.

Credibility

Credibility and integrity depend on telling the truth. This stands for pictures, too. Avoid the pretentious: ground breakings, award presentations, committee plannings; and pseudo events, that is, posed pictures presented as truthful documentation. These types of shots are clichéd, uninteresting and overused. Viewers have seen so many of the same type of image that they will probably pass over yours.

Trick scale can be used to make an object look larger or smaller, depending on the size of the object to which it is compared. A daisy next to a mountain will look very small, but place it next to a pebble and it will appear very large in comparison.

Placing a subject very close to the camera can make it appear larger than its surroundings, too. Shooting up close can make a chair appear to fill an entire room, or a flower as tall as an oak tree in the background. Add to this great depth of field, and subject and background may appear as one. Using trick scale can result in a humorous or deceptive image, so clarify any possible misconceptions in a caption.

The Printing Process

Ideally, a photo that is to be reproduced should have details clearly visible in the highlight and shadow areas, and good contrast in the mid-tone range. For best results, avoid using prints with too much contrast and those that include an excessive number of shadows.

Remember that it's always best to reduce a photograph rather than enlarge. Reducing makes flaws and imperfections less noticeable, and increases the sharpness of a print. A rule of thumb is to try to reduce photos to 50 percent of their original size.

Halftones

A black-and-white photo is considered continuous tone art because it consists of all the tones between the two extremes, as opposed to line art, which consists of black lines and white space. Before going to press, continuous tone art must be converted to line art, or a halftone — a series of dots that gives the illusion of continuous tone. The term *halftone* was coined as such because it appears that half of the image is lost in the process and half remains.

To produce a halftone, the original image is photographed with a special camera through a finely-ruled screen consisting of a dot formation. Screens come in number of dots per inch, or dpi, from 65 to 200. The greater the number of dots, the finer the detail of the reproduced photograph. A plate consisting of a screen of 135 dpi produces excellent results, especially if it is reproduced on high-gloss, smooth-finish paper.

Color Separations

Printing photographs in full-color often adds complications to a print job, resulting in delays, mistakes and, of course, expense. Four-color pre-press work takes a powerful computer with plenty of RAM and a large hard drive, and most in-house publishers don't have this kind of equipment. Even though it may cost a little more, leaving the color separation process to a printer or service bureau is probably the best way to go. They'll know about registration, trappings and the like.

Section 3: Emerging Technologies

In an article for *US Airways Attaché*, Jim Collins gives good reason for public relations professionals to keep up with current photographic technology: "Increasingly, both resolution and sharpness are becoming non-issues, and digital imaging is gaining favor among photographers and in the many places photos are published." At this time, editors of commercial and trade magazines still prefer working with prints or transparencies, but newspaper editors already prefer to work with digital images. Many print shops have risen to the demand for increased digitization, so editors should at least become familiar with what is involved in the digital process.

Desktop Publishing

Desktop publishing has opened up a world of possibilities for the in-house publisher when it comes to photographs. Images can be retouched, resized . . . re-everything. But, according to Parker, "Electronic editing is no substitution for strong original photos." Remember, truthful images are important to credibility. It's too easy to manipulate reality electronically, but today's software is valuable because it allows you to do much of the planning in-house. You don't have to guess what you want and risk sending misdirections to the printer. In essence, you can save a great deal of time and money by knowing how to use the following desktop publishing functions:

Cropping: It's a lot easier to visualize results and determine proportions when you're looking at an image on a screen.

Enlarging and reducing: The user can reduce or enlarge a photo while cropping at the same time. Remember that enlarging can cause an image to turn fuzzy or grainy, so work with the largest print available and make sure the image is digitized at the proper resolution.

Flipping and flopping: You can reverse an image so lines of force lead into the page, drawing a reader's eye inward instead of outward and off the page. This creates a mirror image, so pay attention to text and other tell-tale signs of manipulation.

Touch-up problem spots: You can get rid of blemishes, scratches and other minor imperfections.

Adjust contrast, brighten tone, sharpen image: You can improve the appearance of an image somewhat, but your best bet is to use a good original.

Special effects: Create cut-outs by eliminating a background completely.

Importing the Image

The digital age has introduced new methods of capturing images besides the standard camera. While most professionals agree that digital images are no comparison to those produced from a negative, digital equipment is constantly being improved. Peter Lien predicts that within the next seven years digital photography will rival film, but he believes that film is still the best storage medium. For example, at less than \$15, one roll of 35mm film holds approximately one terabyte of potential digital information; a digital camera that can capture a comparable amount (four-color information in 1/30 of a second) costs thousands of dollars.

The advantage of digital cameras is that they allow you to shoot and see the results instantaneously. You can even delete the images you don't want. The downside of this aspect is that, because an image shows up on the screen right away, too much time is spent on a shoot trying to get the "perfect" image. This lessens the reliability on the photographer's expertise to produce a usable shot.

There are two types of digital cameras: those that capture images on a disk for downloading and those where images are downloaded directly from the camera via a cable connected to the central processing unit (CPU). At this time, the typical digital camera produces images at 72 dpi. To reproduce effectively, an image should be at least

300 dpi. The price tags for the best digital cameras are quite hefty, and the process has yet to be proven cost-effective; however, as with any other technology, they are sure to become more affordable in time.

Scanners enable an editor to import a photograph into a computer system and, through the use of photo-editing software, incorporate it into a page layout. The image is placed on a digitizing table and the scanner reads the image and converts it into a halftone, the greater the dpi capabilities, the sharper the image. For color photos, a scanner is capable of reading 9,000 color tint possibilities. It can also produce color separations in 65- to 150-line screens. Like any other computer equipment, the better the scanner, the better the results. As time goes on, scanners are producing better images at affordable costs. For a price, a printer can scan a publication's images using professional-level equipment. At a range of \$10,000 to \$50,000, most in-house publishers can't afford a scanner that produces truly professional results.

With video capture systems, editors can download a frame from videotape to computer using special equipment.

You can transfer a large number of original images to a CD-ROM and import them into your document. Having many images in one place is an ideal storage method.

Once a photo is imported into the system, it can be adjusted to fulfill a layout's requirements. With the proper output device, black-and-white images of reproducible quality can be submitted to the printer as camera-ready copy. For color images, separations can be produced, but it's best to submit either the original photo or a digitized version on disk and let the printer produce the separations.

Software programs such as Adobe PhotoShop automate complex retouching processes that once required tedious darkroom work. Using an imported image, you can crop or resize it; tweak density, contrast, and color values; eliminate dust and scratches; and even correct perspective. However, many software packages on the market are designed for prepress work: getting images ready to be published in newspapers,

magazines, and annual reports or on boxes and billboards. That is, they're keyed toward turning out halftones and color separations for publication, not to output photographic prints. Using them properly requires a great deal of experience and expertise.

Stock Photography

Stock photo agencies have been around for a long time; however, editors and public relations professionals can now peruse many company's holdings over the Internet and download them via modem. Images of lesser quality can be downloaded instantaneously; once an editor decides the photo he or she wants, the company will provide a reproducible version of the image. Most companies charge a royalty, but an increasing number are offering them royalty free.

If the availability of royalty-free photos continues to grow, the photography profession could suffer tremendously. An enormous selection of lifestyle images will be "in the can" and, at less than \$300 per image, there will be little work for assignment photographers other than for spot news, corporate portraits and new products. This could also generalize the look of organizational publications, since everyone will have access to the same images.

Outputting the Image

For suitable camera-ready copy in black and white, print out images on a laser printer. Most provide a minimum of 300 dpi, which may be fine for small jobs, but such low resolution often causes dithering, jagged edges and a grainy appearance. For commercial-quality results, output the document from a professional phototypesetting machine that provides greater resolution. Because these typesetters are so costly, an editor may opt to provide images on disk to the print shop and let them handle the output. This takes a lot of storage space and formatting or incompatibility problems with the printer's equipment may occur. Therefore, it may be more cost effective simply to hand the

original prints to the printer and pay to have them scanned it. The printer can then adjust the density of the image for improved results.

A good typesetting machine can produce color separations but, unless you have an expert in-house, it's best to leave these to the printer. There are so many details to consider, such as trappings, registration and the like, and not getting them right could ultimately hold up a job and add expense.

Ethics

Just as darkroom retouching can tamper a photo's truth, an irresponsible editor can make an honest photo lie through cropping or electronic alterations, or even through what is written in the caption.

Modern technology crept up on our society so quickly that we didn't have time to stop and think about the ethical ramifications. Now, abuses and misrepresentations are forcing us to address a number of ethical concerns.

According to the code of the American Society of Media Photographers, the responsibility lies with the photojournalist to never alter the content or meaning of a news photograph. But in reality, manipulation goes to the very core of the picture-making process. Many times, photographers set up a shot to get more dynamic results with the consent of all parties involved, except the audience. Then, long-standing darkroom techniques as tame as burning and dodging hedge the visual truth even further. Once an art director gets hold of the image, digital alteration and manipulation go another step further. It's easy to take out a person in a crowd, for example, and no one would ever know by just looking at the photograph that it wasn't what the photographer saw through the viewfinder.

But what qualifies as an alteration? The answer: Just about anything that goes beyond traditional techniques. And where is the line that divides unethical behavior and illegal practice?

Attorneys at Weyerhaeuser Co., a major paper-producing company in Washington State, advised its editors that alterations that were not misleading should not present legal problems. But already one altered photo had appeared in a company publication: a strategically placed, computer generated bush covered the fact that one person was wearing the wrong kind of safety boots. As a result, Weyerhaeuser Co. developed the following guidelines for digitized photos. Public relations professionals and editors should take heed of the guidelines when planning their publications.

It is **acceptable** to:

- darken overexposed areas and lighten underexposed areas or make minor improvements that would have been done in a darkroom.
- improve the appearance of people, such as removing blemishes.
- remove elements that would distract from the main message of a photo such as a telephone pole growing from someone's head.
- correct optical illusions created by the camera.

It is **unacceptable** to add, remove, or change anything that would:

- alter the main message of the photo.
- make an image look different from the way those present remember it.
- make subjects appear to be working in a safer manner than they actually were when the photo was taken.

If text can carry quotation marks, a symbol of truth, then why can't photos? New York University's Committee for New Standards for Photographic Reproduction in the Media suggests that a label be placed next to every image that has been significantly manipulated while still appearing to have been created by photographic processes. In the committee's proposal, unaltered images would carry a boxed circle icon, with the circle representing a camera lens; altered images would get the same icon with a slash through it. Either icon would appear just outside the left or right bottom perimeter of the image.

The committee wants to protect the credibility of photographic documentation and the rights of citizens, who deserve to be informed honestly of the nature of the world in which they live — an ideal that is not so far removed from written communication. The question will always exist, however, Whose truth is it anyway?

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