



The Benefits of Studio Photography

By Simon Taylor

In recent times marketing has become an important facet of a practices success. Every angle of promotion is being utilised, from websites and brochures to magazine and billboard advertisements, even television. With this barrage of visual media comes the necessity to provide suitable photographs.

To maximise the impact of your marketing efforts, serious consideration must be given to the photographs used. Selecting the right images can be no easy task.

What it all boils down to is a choice between using stock images from an image library or having a professional photographer create a collection of images to your needs and specifications.

There are many image libraries around. Many such libraries specialise on specific subject matters, others are more general in their contents. I've yet to find one specialising in dental but I'm sure one must exist.

Choosing a stock image for something as important as your website or sales brochures is a relatively painless (albeit timely) exercise. Locate a suitable image library, preview the images (sometimes from a collection of tens of thousands), find the image you want, pay for it and download it. This image is now yours to use.

All that is fine except that anyone anywhere can purchase that same image and use it on anything they want. A particular company/product putting an image to good use on an advertising campaign, only to have a completely different company run a completely different campaign using the same imagery can prove confusing and sometimes costly to your advertising campaign.

This creates several problems, firstly it generates confusion. People will identify visually with the image linking it to a particular product or service. Seeing it in conjunction with another product or service may cause people to link the two together, identifying one product with another and confusing the message that is being portrayed by each individual campaign.

Secondly it can completely undermine the entire campaign as people may identify that image as a stock photo. By using a face or a scene in your marketing means that you want your potential patient to believe in your message. If they start to see the image everywhere, it takes the impact away from your campaign as it will suddenly seem 'generic'.

Obviously there are so many images available that this may not happen but you may want to avoid it altogether by looking at another solution.

So, what other options do we have? The simple answer is to create (or have created), a personal image bank. The benefits of this numerous:

Sole Ownership:

Having your own images means that no one else will be using them. They will be seen in your promotion campaign and nowhere else as you have created them solely for your use. They will be unique to your practice.

Personalising:

A website featuring images of the doctor and actual staff members is always a bonus. Having a professionally shot set of images of staff will greatly enhance the look and feel of any website.

Cost:

Stock images are not cheap. Depending upon the quality and the desired output size, a stock image can become very pricey. Having said that, a studio shoot is not necessarily cheap either however the images are yours to keep and can be used as many times as you want on as many different mediums you want. Some of these costs can be offset if you have a friend, colleague or relative that may have the right 'look' for your practice and marketing.

However, comparatively speaking a studio shoot will be far cheaper per image. A half-day studio session can easily yield 100 images, be it of staff, patients or hired models.

Why use a studio?

A question we are often asked is "Do we really need a studio?" The simple answer is no. Many doctors are happy to have 'on the premises' shots taken with the background being the practice, the surgery or perhaps views from where your practice is located. The trouble is that there is only so much that can be achieved within the confines of a small surgery and using portable flash equipment.



Using a studio gives us the backgrounds we need to provide us with a generic image that can be placed anywhere. Plus, the amount of equipment that can be used in a studio is much greater than what can be carried around to a practice.

A make-up artist is highly recommended but may not be necessary, depending on the type of shots you would want on the day.

Stock image prices:

Depending on the intended application, a stock image can be expensive. If the image is to appear on a web site the price is not too bad however an image of this size and quality will not be suitable for print. A larger image will be required and the cost will be increased accordingly, often tripling the price purchased for the website.

This may increase again when you need the image for a poster or billboard as again, the image needs to be much larger so that it is clear and visible at that size.

Taking this into account, the cost of filling a brochure or a website with images can quickly add up. It makes sense to create your own and have a large assortment to choose from.

Summary:

Although stock photo's can be very effective in their use as there is such a vast number of different faces, features and lifestyle scenes, you will always run the risk of your message being distorted by another company using your image. There may be a larger initial outlay for your own personal photo library but the benefits are endless and you will get a return on that investment in no time.

Here at The Photo Shop, we have our own studio facilities and access to models, make up artists and all the equipment necessary to provide you with the best possible photographs for your own specific requirements. We spend a great deal of time with dentists and are highly experienced in knowing the type of imagery that works and how it is best portrayed. If you would like an obligation free quote or just some more information on the services provided by The Photo Shop, contact Simon Taylor on 02 9211 1477 or info@thephotoshop.com.au.

