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FREELANCE SAVVY

A Perfect Match

Complement your manuscripts—and expand your writing portfolio—with photography.

BY PETER SMOLENS

Although many fine articles are published without pictures and just as many excellent photographs appear without words, in today's visual world, writing and photography oftentimes go hand in hand.

Tim Conway, associate editor of *Going Away Magazine* (of Woodall's Publication Group), says, "In our freelance contract, we make it clear that the package isn't complete until the acceptable editorial and artwork is received." Editors at *Rider* and *Houseboat* magazines agree and often require photographs as part of their submission packages, as well.

Understanding how to take the right photographs for your articles is key to selling them. First, you'll need the right equipment. Most magazines will accept slides, prints and digital images, which can be taken with a variety of cameras. Editors expect the results to be clear, sharp and high-quality. "Digital images should be submitted in high-resolution format, preferably 300 dpi," Conway says. "Online photos are typically at 72 dpi, and while these photos may look good on screen, they don't reproduce well in the magazine."

When taking pictures for your article, change the angle, distance and exposure often. Provide more than enough photos so the editor has a large selection from which to choose. Conway adds: "We like a variety of horizontal and vertical shots because it gives the graphic artists more to work with when laying out the story."

CREATING PHOTOS TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR ARTICLES

The purpose of photography in illustrating your manuscripts is to complement or highlight specific points of an article. Good photography illustrates a situation as it could be, or as it should be. Happy or sad, joyful or painful, each photograph must create a mood or evoke a feeling to get across the purpose of the article. How to do just that? According to Rohn Engh, director of PhotoSource International and author of *How to Sell and Retell Your Photos*, "Good photography should have four elements: background, person, symbol [the

reason you're taking the picture] and involvement."

Think about the accompanying photos early in the writing process. "For a travel article, the adage that a picture tells a thousand words is quite true," Conway says. "We want to combine entertaining, informative editorial with quality photos to make the readers feel like they're visiting the location." When conducting preliminary research on the subject, note the type of pictures that should accompany the articles in your research materials. Create a list of possible locations and situations you want to shoot to save valuable time during your trip.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

When submitting photos, deciding the number of photos to include in each package depends on the nature of the submission. Color 35mm slides fit nicely into plastic pages that hold 20 slides per page (these are available at most photo stores). Slides should be numbered for reference, with each slide bearing your name, as well. Digital images should be put on a CD-ROM.

Include a packing list with a short description of each numbered image; ideally, your description could be used as a caption. To reduce the risks that go along with postal mail, be sure to package your photographs and slides securely. If you're going to use a standard 10-by-13-inch envelope, include a cardboard stiffener to hold your submission together. And remember, many publishers won't return your submission without an SASE.

Don't be frugal when submitting your photos; use first-class mail. And always keep careful records of which submissions are where, including the photographs sent. Without a submission-tracking system, it's easy to lose track of this crucial information. When your submission is returned, the tracking system will allow you to record which of your photographs were returned along with it.

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