BUILDING A BRAND FOR SPECIALTY DAIRY

DESIGNING YOUR BRAND IDENTITY: *PHOTOGRAPHY*

November 7, 2018

OUR HELPFUL TECHNIQUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Taking great photographs requires a certain frame of mind. There are many factors that go into a good picture, but the camera takes only a split second to snap the picture, and it's hard to focus on everything at once during that moment.

While trained professionals will always take the best photos, there are things you can do to take great photos for your brand on your budget. Keeping your goals in mind can help you to snap the right shots. Thinking about photographic elements can help take your photography to the next level.

KEEPING YOUR BRAND'S PHOTOGRAPHIC STYLE

Keeping your brand's photographic style in mind will help to keep your photos on track!
Your imagery should revolve around your products. Capture not only the garnished final products, but all stages in the process. Photograph the sources of ingredients and nutrients, the processes of food creation, creative chefs at work, and wise farmers perfecting their craft.

Portray the lifestyle that comes with local food. Convey a strong sense of unique place and atmosphere. Capture what is unique about your community and each dish. Capture different dining atmospheres. Portray hard work, business development, and success along the way. Look for genuine smiles!


Use a quality image capturing device. The first step to professional looking photos is having the right tools. Use the best device that is accessible to you. Auto-focusing cameras don't always correctly guess what you are taking a picture of. Make sure that the important part of the photo is the part in focus. Stand still to take photos. Make sure your lens is not foggy.
Don't distort images by disproportionately stretching, squashing, or skewing them.

FRAMING

Consider the entire frame of your photographs. Primarily, your focus will be on your subject, but the rest of the frame is just as important. Review the following:

• What is in the foreground (in front of your subject?)
• What is in the background?
• Does anything in the photo make the scene feel unprofessional or interfere with the mood you want to convey?
• Do you need to rearrange or alter the scene to
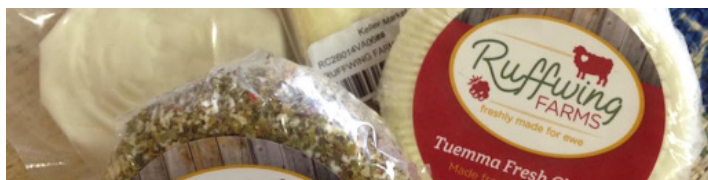
SARE
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

ACEnet

Rural Action

Women Grow Ohio

control what is in the frame?
• Is anything being cut off?
• What else could be included in the frame if you zoomed out?
• What could be really focused on if you zoomed in?
• How does the photo change if you frame it vertically as opposed to horizontally?

The frame created by your camera might not be the shape that you want in the end. What will you use this photo for? What sort of shape will you need to crop it to?

VANTAGE POINT

Consider different vantage points from which to take each photo. Most people will take pictures of what they see at eye level without thinking about other views. Sometimes those pictures turn out great, but a more interesting, unique angle can be more compelling than an unconsidered, common vantage point.

What is the typical vantage point from which your subject is most often seen? What would happen if you took the photo from below? What would the photo look like from a bird's eye view? What other angles might work?

Consider all 360 degrees around your subject. If you stood somewhere else, would the background be better? Would the overall photo be better?

LIGHTING

Light makes photography possible. Some lighting conditions are better than others. The ideal light for photography is soft, indirect, natural sunlight. Harsh bright light can cause squinting and make subjects look unnatural or blown out.

Only use the flash on your camera as a last resort, when the scene cannot be brightened any other way.

Photos tend to be especially discolored when different kinds of light sources are mixed together,


such as natural sunlight and artificial light bulbs. Indoor artificial lighting can cause your photos to look discolored by throwing off the white balance, or the designation of what is "white," in your photo. Try to limit your light source to one kind of light to get the truest colors. To limit artificial light, turn them off, shoot near a window, or go outside. Ways to limit sunlight include shooting indoors at night and avoiding windows. You can also combat discoloration from lighting by adjusting the white balance on your camera, if that is an option for you. Consider lighting when you decide on a vantage point. If your light source is behind your subject, your subject will look dark. If the only light source is pointed directly at your subject, your subject may look too light or too flat. It's best to have light hitting your subject at an indirect angle.

Can you tell the difference in the pasta sauce pictures below? The one on far left was taken in a controlled setting, with a digital camera. The one in the middle was taken in mixed lighting and on the far right the picture was taken outside with the light from behind.

PHOTOGRAPHY'S PURPOSE

Your brand's purpose is to show local food in a great light, and photography is one of the best ways to
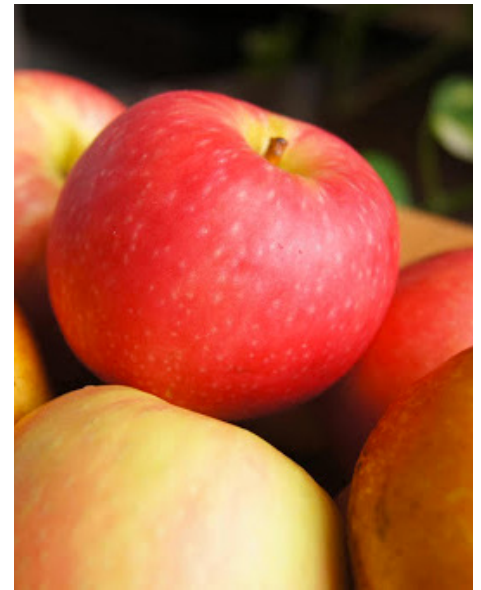
do that. Whether you're photographing a plated dish, a raw ingredient, or packaged products, these techniques can help.

Try photographing the process that creates the food, whether that be farming, cooking, packaging, or something else. You can also try photographing the finished product next to the ingredients, seeds, or tools that it was created with.

Think about what is the most appealing about this food and emphasize that trait:

- Is it the texture?
- The presentation?
- The overall scene?
- The color?
- A certain ingredient?

You can't be afraid to move the product around. Set a scene. Work on presentation. Use props! Think about colors and textures that will really make this food shine. Consider items like plates, cutlery, tables, tablecloths, baskets, cooking utensils, shopping carts, and etcetera. Make sure your props are cleanand flattering. Make sure the food looks appetizing. Consider adding garnishes, or drizzling sauces.

Let a retailer know in advance that you intend to photograph dairy products in their store for promotion. They might have ideas or props to improve the presentation. Try photographing someone interacting with the food in a natural way.

PHOTOGRAPHY ETHICS

Stock photos and photos taken from the Internet will never be truly genuine, but when we need to use them, we need to be ethical. We need to make sure that there are not copyright restrictions on them. Photographers and artists work hard to produce photos and clip-art! You will need to search for photos that specifically do not have copyright protections, because by default all images are copyrighted to their photographers. You will need to search for photos in the public domain or photos protected under a Creative Commons license. An Internet search will help you find sites with photo archives in the public domain or protected by a Creative Commons license.

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