

# Riger

## R E P R I N T

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## Choosing the Right Photograph

Photography is probably the most widely used visual medium for graphic designers. The right photographic images can reach out and grab our attention. In fact, good photography goes a long way in helping an advertiser demonstrate a product or service, explain its uses, or even create emotion. But choosing the right photograph is more difficult than it may seem. The designer must weigh several important considerations:

### Is the photograph appropriate? Has it been professionally photographed? Can it be faithfully reproduced?

#### Appropriate?

First, the photograph must be relevant to the communication problem. Does it help explain your message? Does the photo draw the reader's attention to your ad or literature? Is the photographic technique appropriate? What is the photograph's relationship to the overall design of the piece? Good graphic designers are trained to place, size and crop photos in just the right way to maximize their attention-getting ability.

Because good photography exists all around us (in magazines, newspapers, on television...), we've become quite adept at judging the believability of these images. False or contrived photos are easily spotted by the more sophisticated reader. So care must be taken to insure a positive reader reaction and response.

#### Professionally photographed?

Photographers are trained visual communicators who have technical knowledge about the use of sophisticated equipment, lighting techniques, etc. They can also enhance the very thoughts and ideas of the graphic designer. Since working with photos is one of the most important aspects of the designer's work, a good relationship between the photographer and

designer is crucial to a successful end product. The designer who considers the photographer a mere vendor, whose only purpose is to carry out the designer's directives and click the shutter, will probably miss the creative rewards of this collaborative effort.

#### Faithfully reproduced?

Reproduction quality is more likely to decrease rather than increase through the many steps from originals to finished pieces. In other words, a slight deterioration can occur as you move from an original to a negative, and then back to a positive print or printed piece. As a result, printers and pre-press bureaus preparing the photographs for platemaking must be able to start with the best originals possible. Want a good end product? Start with good originals!

#### How to evaluate black and white photography

**Focus.** Check that the important parts of the image are in sharp focus, especially if you plan to enlarge it.

**Contrast.** Study contrast to be sure you're starting with strong blacks, clean whites, and a full range of gray tones.

**Detail.** Inspect shadow areas and highlights for adequate clarity of features.

**Flaws.** Verify that the photograph is flat and has no scratches, dirt or blemishes.

**Distractions.** Examine photographs that will be enlarged to be sure there are no features that may draw unwanted attention.

**Photo paper.** Make sure that the photograph is printed on smooth, semigloss or glossy paper.

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