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[AND BE THERE]

IN-HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

Prepared for Rosedale Development Association

“It is less important to have technique than it is to be where the photograph might happen, knowing what photo you’re after, and being open and aware enough to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities that present themselves. A basic understanding of how the device works will facilitate the situation. You find the picture. Tell a story.”

— Jeffrey Hill



Lizzardbrand

Tips for good pix

Find your angle

- How will you communicate your idea?
- Tell a story. (Why should we care?)
- Convey emotion.
- Surprise and compel.

Study lighting

When shooting outdoors:

- Look for interesting lighting.
- Avoid shooting at high noon (pun intended) when shadows and light are the harshest and unflattering. Shoot photos in the early morning and late afternoon.
- When shooting in the shade, be aware of the lighting behind your subjects.

When shooting indoors:

- Try using available light such as a north-facing window. Avoid direct sunlight.
- Avoid fluorescent and incandescent lighting because they are tinted with color, not white.
- Don't get too close with the flash — it casts harsh shadows and “blows out” details.

Avoid these situations:

- Avoid backlighting unless you want a silhouette.
- Avoid shooting dark and light objects in the same frame. The lens will try to compensate and the photo will have less contrast.
- Avoid light backgrounds when photographing people of color to get more detail in their faces.

Prepare in advance

- Know in advance what you want to shoot. Find your shot, then be open to all other possibilities.
- Stake out the location and be aware of lighting.
- Look at background opportunities/limitations.
- Use props.

Control your frame

- See through the camera lens.
- Decide what you do/do not want in the frame.
- Look for obstacles like telephone poles out of people's heads and cut-off body parts.
- Avoid ugly backgrounds and objects that are in the way.

Snap your photo

- Foreground: Shoot close in and be intimate with your subjects. Be aware of details.
- Background: Use it to further the idea. Don't let it be whatever happens to be there.
- Explore different angles (from above, from below, from the hip).
- Shoot with a poetic brain, as in illustrating your favorite book.

Use a camera when you can

Let's face it, the majority of people are taking photographs with their cell phones because it is more convenient and costs less than a good digital camera. Depending on the quality of your smart phone, use a camera when you can. If you're using your cell phone, be aware of these things:

- Cell phones have wide angle lenses. Things are not as close as they appear.
- Get closer to your subject matter.
- Images are flattened and distorted around the edges. Be aware when photographing people.

Stay focused

- Hold the camera still! Hold your breath in when you click.
- Make sure your photos are in critical focus. Otherwise, they will look unprofessional.
- Shoot LOTS and LOTS of photos. Check focus, but edit later.

“Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.”

— Roman philosopher Seneca

Improve your photography

Portraits



Avoid centering your subject matter. The eye stops there.



Compose asymmetrically for eye movement. Utilize the background.

Duos



Avoid large, empty spaces between people.



Get people closer together.

Group shots



For group shots, avoid staging horizontally.



Seat (or stand) people in rows.

Create a striking image

Volunteers



Avoid scattered groups of people.



Talk to your subjects to get them to interact with you. Get them to smile!

Events



Show people's faces and avoid harsh lighting.



Shoot close in and personal with your subjects.

Meetings and presentations



Avoid backs of people and boring composition.



Find a better angle. Get people to interact with each other.

Contact us

Give us a ring or shoot us a message and let's chat about what we can do for you:



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