

Selecting Publicity Photos and Graphics

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- » Understand the importance of publicity photos
- » Know the components of a good photo
- » Work with professional photographers
- » Write a photo caption
- » Create other graphics
- » Set up photo and graphic files
- » Distribute photos and artwork

The Importance of Publicity Photos

Photographs and graphics are important components of news releases and feature stories. They add interest and variety, and they often explain things better than words alone.

Helen Dowler, director of photo services at PR Newswire, told *O'Dwyer's PR Services Report*, "Images should be an integral part of every PR plan. Photos alone, or with a press release, will increase interest in a story. In fact, if your picture illustrates a story well, it can be the deciding factor for an editor on whether to report on a story or someone else's." Indeed, one survey of 200 journalists by PWR New Media found that 80 percent of the respondents were either "much more likely" or "likely" to cover a story if it included high-resolution images.

Today, the digital revolution has made it relatively easy to provide photos and graphics to the media almost instantly via the Internet. Thom Weidlich, a reporter for *PRWeek*, explains: "These days, seemingly nothing could be simpler than supplying a newspaper, magazine, or other publication with a needed photo; just attach a JPEG to an email and whisk it through cyberspace."

This chapter explores the elements that make a good publicity photo or graphic and explains how to prepare the material for media consideration. Its purpose is not to make you a professional photographer, but to give you a better working knowledge of what constitutes a good photo and how to work with photographers to achieve maximum media placement results.

Components of a Good Photo

The adage says that a picture is worth a thousand words. A picture in a newspaper or magazine often takes the same space as a thousand words, but it has much more impact. Studies have shown that more people “read” photographs than read articles. The Advertising Research Foundation found that three to four times as many people notice the average one-column photograph as read the average news story. In another study, Professor Wayne Wanta of the University of Missouri found that articles accompanied by photographs are perceived as significantly more important than those without photographs.

This also applies to graphics, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

Publicity photos, however, are not published if they are not high resolution and if they do not appeal to media gatekeepers. Although professional photographers should be hired to take the photos, the public relations writer often supervises their work and selects the photos best suited for media use. Therefore, you need to know what makes a good publicity photo.

Product photos are particularly challenging. One approach is to simply show the product, such as a new computer, in a stark background so it is highlighted. HP, for example, provides such photos to the trade press; an example is shown in Figure 8.1. Another approach is to show someone actually using the product. Yet another approach is to “sex it up” with an attractive model standing next to the product. Samsung, for example, distributed a publicity photo for its new 3D television with several attractive Korean models in tight-fitting dresses, sitting on a desk around the computer.

Food publicity has its own particular challenges in terms of making a product look savory in a photo. Some tricks are to use motor oil in place of syrup and mashed potatoes instead of real ice cream, use hair spray on produce, and even use brown shoe polish on raw meat to portray a well-grilled hamburger. More tips on taking product photos are on page 192.

FIGURE 8.1 Product photos are often taken with a plain background so the product is highlighted. This photo, showing HP's new TouchSmart PC, was distributed as part of a media kit about the new product. Such photos are often used in the trade press and in specialty sections of a newspaper, such as the technology or business page.

“Motion and still images are valuable.

Somebody might not read the story, but they'll recall the images.”

Amanda Watlington, owner of a marketing consulting firm



Technical Quality

The technical quality of a photo is very important. Indeed, a common complaint of editors is the poor content and technical quality of publicity photos. They look for the key elements of good contrast and sharp detail so the photo reproduces well on everything from glossy magazine pages to cheap newsprint. You must also consider that photos are often reduced in size or, on occasion, enlarged when they are published. If they have good resolution to begin with, they will hold their quality.

Back in the days before the digital revolution, the traditional approach was to submit photos on 35mm slides or even on glossy paper. Today, professionals use digital cameras, and the traditional process of taking photos on film, developing the film, and making prints has practically disappeared except in art photography.

Although the process of taking photos has changed radically, the key elements of a good photo remain the same. Digital photos must have high resolution and sharp detail to be used. Online media, for example, are willing to sacrifice quality for the speed of download, so they typically use images at 72 dpi (dots per inch).

Tips for Success

How to Take Product Photos That Get Published

- + Show the product in a scene where it would logically be used. If it is used in an office, show it in an office.
- + Clean up the area where the picture is to be taken. Remove any litter or extraneous items. Repaint if necessary.
- + If people are in the picture, be sure that they are dressed for the situation. They should wear the kind of clothing that they would wear while using the product.
- + Put perspective into the photo so viewers will know how big the item is. For example, show a hand, a person, or a pencil.
- + Use a top-of-the-line digital camera to ensure maximum quality and resolution.
- + Don't accept anything but the best in photographs. They have a potential shelf life of 5 years; many may be used by others to illustrate books or brochures. Give them quality.
- + Take at least two photos—vertical and horizontal—of each new product. This makes them adaptable to a variety of situations. When possible, show the product in use. Application stories need illustrations.
- + If there are other products in the picture, be sure that the new one is in the dominant position.
- + The setting should be realistic, with everything hooked up and ready to go.
- + Every picture must have an identifying caption.
- + Be sure that the background contrasts with the product. Make the product stand out.

Print publications, however, require much higher resolution, and 300 dpi is a minimum. Distribution services such as NewsCom and Feature Photo Service distribute publicity photos in a 300-dpi JPEG or GIF format to accommodate the needs of almost any publication—from monthly glossy magazines to small weekly newspapers.

Subject Matter

There is a wide variety of subjects for a publicity photo. On one level, there are somewhat static photos of a new product or a newly promoted executive. On another level, photos are used to document events such as a groundbreaking or a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Trade magazines, weekly newspapers, and organizational newsletters often use the standard “grip and grin” photo of a person receiving an award, a company president turning the first shovel of dirt on the site of a new building, or the traditional “ribbon-cutting” ceremony to open a new store. These shots have been a traditional staple of publicity photos for years, and there is no evidence that they are going out of fashion even in the digital age. At the same time, you should be aware that such photos can be quite boring, and editors want more unusual or artistic material.

Award photos nearly always present a problem. In many ways, they are somewhat of a cliché, showing the typical “grip and grin” format. It is relatively easy to violate the concepts of newsworthiness, action, and central focus as awardees merely look at the camera while holding their check or trophy. Award photos, however, are a fact of life and still get published in local newspapers and even in national publications if the individuals are celebrities. You can make such photos more interesting, however, if the subjects are showing some emotion (even a smile would help) and you just show a close-up instead of a person’s full figure. See Figure 8.2 on page 194 for a typical award photograph from the Country Music Awards ceremony.

There is also the problem of the large group photo. Organizations love group photos of everyone who attended the seminar or received an outstanding service award. A group photo may be legitimate when you want to give a souvenir of a particular meeting or conference or provide documentation for a specialized publication, such as a fraternal or alumni magazine. However, pictures of this kind should not be sent to general-circulation newspapers and magazines.

A better approach, if you want media coverage, is to use the local angle. Take small group photos of individuals from a particular city and send them to local dailies or weeklies. In general, you should show activity in a picture: people talking to each other, looking at a display, or shaking hands with a notable person in an informal pose. The people should not be lined up, looking at the camera.

“An award shot that doesn’t show emotion just dies. It’s boring. Get people to yell and scream or hold up a peace sign—it will bring some life to it.” Suzanne Salvo, owner of Salvo Photography



FIGURE 8.2 It is always a challenge to make award photos interesting. One good tip is doing a close-up photo that concentrates on the people's faces. Here Neil Perry, Kimberly Perry, and Reid Perry from the musical group The Band Perry receive an award at the Academy of Country Music Awards in Las Vegas.

A common composition is to show three people all talking or listening to a fourth person who is at the left of the picture. This fourth person may be a keynote speaker, the president of an organization, or someone who has just received an award. Such a composition can provide a focus and add some interest, but even these pictures are somewhat of a tired cliché. In a group situation, it is extremely important to take down the names and titles of people as they are photographed. This will make your job much easier later on, when you have to write the caption, which will be discussed in another section. Don't rely on memory—yours or anyone else's.

Composition

We have already discussed ways to compose photographs of groups. Inherent in all this is the concept of keeping the photo simple and uncluttered. A look at the family album will illustrate the point. We have Aunt Minnie and Uncle Oswald looking like pygmies because the family photographer also wanted to include the entire skyline of New York City. Consequently, Aunt Minnie and Uncle Oswald are about 35 feet from the camera.

In most cases, the photographer should move into, not away from, the central focus of the picture. If the purpose is to show a busy executive at his or her desk, the picture should be taken close up so that the subject fills most of it. Sufficient background should be included to provide context, but it is really not necessary to show the entire surface of the desk—including the disarray of papers, picture of spouse and kids, and paperweight from a recent convention. All of this conflicts with what the viewer is supposed to focus on in the picture.

Another reason for moving in on the subject and minimizing the background or foreground is to achieve good composition. That picture of Aunt Minnie and Uncle Oswald also shows the Empire State Building growing out of Uncle Oswald's head.

Experts have made the following suggestions about composition and clutter:

- » Take tight shots with minimal background. Concentrate on what you want the reader to get from the picture. A good example of a tight shot is shown in Figure 8.3.
- » Emphasize detail, not whole scenes.
- » Don't use a cluttered background. Pick up stray things that intrude on the picture.
- » Try to frame the picture.
- » Avoid wasted space. There should not be a large gap between an object, such as an award, and the person's face. In the case of a group picture, people should stand close to each other.
- » Ask subjects wearing sunglasses to remove them.

All this advice is logical, but there may be times when the background plays an important role. If the purpose of the photo is to show someone in his or her work setting, it is important to capture a sense of the person's environment. A photo of a manager in management information systems, for example, might show him or her surrounded by three or four computers and a stack of printouts. Phil Douglass, a widely known photographic consultant, calls it the "environmental portrait." He continues, "Such portraits blend posed subjects with their supporting context to symbolize jobs, capture personalities, and ultimately communicate something about them to readers."

FIGURE 8.3 A strong, appealing, well-composed photo focuses on the subject and minimizes the background. This photo, distributed by Intel to publicize its annual Science Talent Search, highlights one of the high school finalists tinkering with his research project to improve the precision of atomic clocks.



Action

Action is important because it projects movement and the idea that something is happening right before the reader's eyes. A picture of someone doing something—talking, gesturing, laughing, running, operating a machine—is more interesting than a picture of a person standing still and looking at the camera. Douglass says, "Interactive exchanges are the most productive form of communication. Photojournalism is an ideal medium for visually expressing how people communicate interactively with each other."

America's amateur photographers have filled the nation's family albums with pictures of Aunt Minnie and Uncle Oswald in rigid, formal poses, staring blankly, but a quick look through your daily newspaper will not turn up this kind of shot. Prize-winning news photographs bear out that action and interaction among people are the key elements in successful photography. In other words, take pictures of people doing something or interacting with others—not just staring at the camera. A good example is the photo on page 64 in Chapter 3 showing celebrities at a National Education Association (NEA) gathering to kick off the "Reading Across America" campaign.

With some thinking, an action photo can be taken of almost any situation. Professional photographers recommend, however, that the best "action" photos are those taken when the subjects are being spontaneous and are not conscious of the camera. Consequently, photographers will often take multiple shots over a period of several minutes to get the best facial expressions and portrayal of more natural interaction.

However, sometimes a straight head-and-shoulders portrait is exactly what is needed. For example, a press release announcing a promotion or the new president of a club or organization is often accompanied by what is referred to as a *mug shot*. See Figure 8.4 for a typical example. Such photos are used for organizational newsletters and sent to the business section of a local daily for use as a thumbnail in a brief paragraph about the individual's promotion or hiring.

You should not conclude, however, that all good pictures must suggest overt action. Some of the greatest photos have been character studies of people whose faces

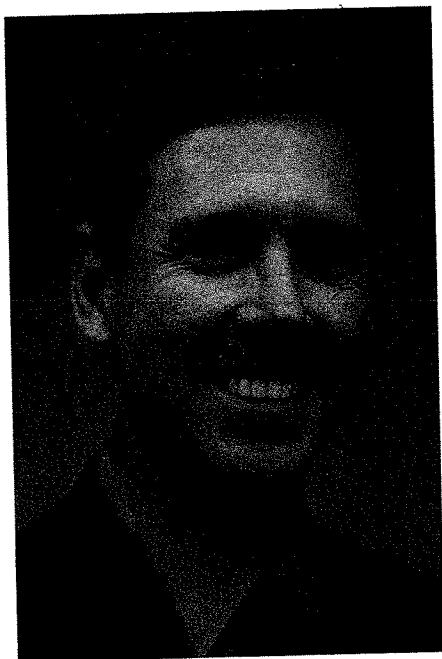


FIGURE 8.4 Organizations usually distribute a short news release and a photo to announce the promotion of an executive. These head-and-shoulder photos, also known as "mug shots," are commonly used in business publications. The caption is simply the name of the individual and perhaps his or her new title. This photo, distributed by Business Wire, is of Jeff Weikert, who was appointed vice president of sales for RewardsNow.

reflected their happiness at having won an award, their intense concentration on a critical issue, or their sorrow at having lost an election.

Scale

With inanimate objects, it is important to consider the scale. The picture should contain some element of known size so that the viewer can understand how big or small the object is. With large machines, it is common and effective to place a person in the picture. This helps the viewer estimate the approximate size of the picture's subject. A good example is the person standing beside Panasonic's new 155-inch high-definition plasma screen in Figure 8.5.

When smaller things are photographed, the scale guide is even more important. This also offers an opportunity to provide drama and adds the news value of novelty. For example, a new computer chip from Intel was photographed beside a penny—and the chip was even a bit smaller. In another situation, a manufacturer of a memory card illustrated its capacity by showing a person holding the card, surrounded by a pile of papers and brochures that could be placed on the card.

Camera Angle

Interest can also be achieved through the use of unusual camera angles. Starbucks illustrated its decision to carry Naked Juice (100 percent juices and smoothies) in its 7,000 outlets using the perspective of the camera inside the refrigeration unit looking out, capturing an employee framed at the door reaching in to get a bottle of the product. See Figure 8.6.

Another approach is the extreme close-up that emphasizes shapes and patterns. A photo of a new mainframe computer isn't very interesting, so it's important to look at the situation and come up with an interesting angle that makes a better photo. IBM, for example, chose to show the unusual angle of a technician assembling part of a module that was part of the

FIGURE 8.5 Showing scale and size is important in many product publicity photos. The size of Panasonic's new 150-inch HD plasma screen is better understood by having a person stand beside it. The large image of the panda, which fills the entire screen, is also attention getting and illustrates a key feature of the product—picture clarity.





FIGURE 8.6 An unusual angle can make even a bottle of fruit juice more interesting. This publicity photo, distributed by the Naked Juice Company, shows the perspective of looking out of the refrigeration unit and focuses on a person reaching in to get a container. This element of "action" in the photo elevates a ho-hum product picture into something much more interesting.

new supercomputer. See Figure 8.7 on page 199 for the publicity photo that was made available to the media.

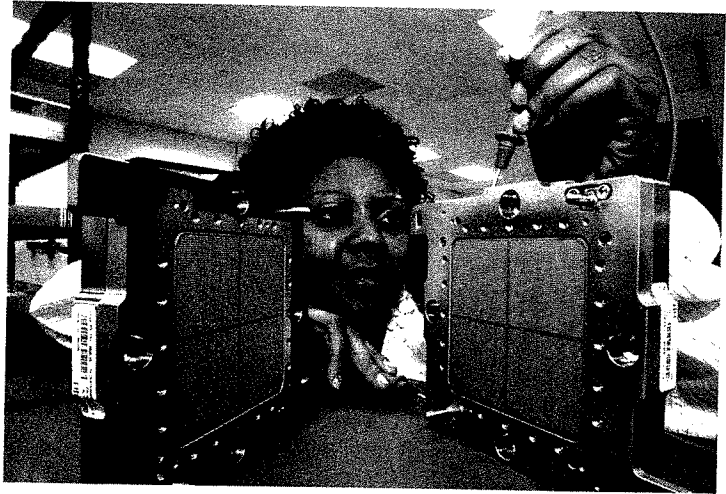
Some other camera angles commonly used are (1) shooting upward at a tall structure to make it look even taller, (2) taking an aerial shot to give the viewer a chance to see something that might otherwise be unnoticeable, and (3) using a fish-eye lens to capture a 180-degree image.

Lighting and Timing

Indoor pictures often require more than a flash on a camera. Depending on the subject, a photographer may have to use supplemental lighting to remove or enhance shadows to highlight a key element—a person's face, a product, or some aspect of the background. Even simple product photos, where the background is plain white or black to ensure that the product stands out, require considerable lighting expertise.

Outdoor photos also have their challenges. In general, outdoor pictures taken in the morning or late afternoon are better for contrast than pictures taken at midday. Of

FIGURE 8.7 Mainframe computers are big square boxes that are really dull to look at, let alone photograph for publicity purposes. IBM solved the problem by focusing on the assembly of the computer, using an unusual camera angle that emphasized shapes and the human element.



course, the photographer can use a flash to lighten dark areas.

Selecting the location or setting of a picture is important if you want good, sharp results.

For example, if you know that the people involved will be wearing light colors, you should not use a white background. Conversely, don't select a dark background if your photo subjects will be wearing dark clothing. In both cases, the result will be "floating heads," because the clothing will blend into the background. In all situations, you want to strive for high contrast between the background and the individuals being photographed.

Color

Before the digital age, most publicity photographs were produced in black and white because they were economical, versatile, and acceptable to most publications. However, color photographs are now the industry standard and used by all kinds of publications as printing technology has become more sophisticated and less expensive. If a publication plans to use black-and-white photos, color photos can easily be converted. Most of the photos in this book, for example, were originally in color.

Everything that has been said about composition and quality should be underlined in relation to color pictures. To be used, they must be outstanding in both interest and technical quality.

Working with Photographers

It is important to use a skilled photographer with professional experience. Too many organizations try to cut corners by asking an employee with a point-and-click digital camera or even an iPhone to take pictures. Often, the public relations writer is also asked to take the photos. This may be all right for the company newsletter, but publicity photos sent to the media must be extremely high quality if they are going to be competitive with the thousands of other photos that are readily available.

It will cost more money to hire a professional photographer, but at least you won't end up with pictures that are dull, poorly composed, and generally unusable. Another

reason is that it's better business practice to use a professional who has formal training in visual communications. He or she is experienced and uses high-quality equipment, which usually produces much better results. Your job, as the public relations professional, is to figure out the purpose of the photograph and its objective. It's the photographer's job to figure how to accomplish the objective from a visual perspective.

Finding Photographers

You should have a file of photographers, noting their fees and particular expertise. If you have no such file built up, you might consult colleagues to find out if they can make any recommendations. If you are unfamiliar with a photographer's work, ask to see his or her portfolio. This is important, because photographers are skilled at different things.

A good portrait photographer, for example, may not be good at photographing special events. A news photographer, by contrast, may be an expert at special events but unable to take good product photographs. In sum, you should find the best photographer for each kind of job.



Tips for Success Photo Advice from the Experts

The following 10 tips were given by three photo experts at a workshop sponsored by MediaLink/WirePix at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The list was originally compiled by Jerry Walker for *O'Dwyer's PR Report*.

1. Remember that photographs, even for publicity, are not advertising. Make sure you identify the news value of the story you want to illustrate.
2. Wire services like AP get a thousand or more photos a day. Your photo needs to tell a story quickly and creatively and have real news value to make the cut.
3. Capture images that tell your story at a glance. If your story is you're donating money to build homes for the homeless, get a photo of people building homes, not a "grip and grin" check presentation.
4. Write a complete and proper caption. Don't be misleading.
5. Identify the audience you are trying to reach. Photos for newspapers and trade publications are different than those for annual reports or brochures.
6. Get stories out in a timely fashion. Day-of-event photos are important. Use a respected distributor who is experienced with newsroom operations.
7. Try to create photos that have a shelf life and can be used for other projects down the road.
8. If you are organizing a press event, make sure you provide the media, both print and broadcast, with a visual opportunity. Talking heads at the podium are not visual.
9. Don't try to overbrand the photo. It should look spur-of-the-moment, even if it isn't.
10. PhotoShop is a wonderful tool. Don't abuse it by altering reality in your photos.

Three experts at a workshop sponsored by MediaLink/WirePix say that public relations professionals should always ask a prospective photographer two questions before hiring him or her: (1) Can you show me examples of other similar photos you have taken? and (2) What contacts do you have with the media and how will you help me distribute the photo once it has been shot? More advice about publicity photos is on page 200.

Contracts

Any agreement with a photographer should be in writing. A written document helps you to avoid misunderstandings about fees, cost of materials, and copyright ownership of the images.

A letter of agreement with a photographer should cover the following matters:

- » What is the photographer's professional fee for taking pictures? Is it on a project basis or based on an hourly fee?
- » How are out-of-pocket expenses, such as meals, mileage, lodging, etc., handled while on assignment? Does the photographer get a daily per diem or submit receipts?
- » What will be delivered upon completion of the assignment? Will it be a digital file on CD or a website?
- » Who will supervise the photographer? Will you or someone else in the organization help the photographer set up shots?
- » Who will retain the images? Under copyright law, photographers retain ownership unless the signed agreement gives full ownership and control to the organization commissioning the work.
- » Does the organization have unrestricted use of the photograph, or does it have to get permission from the photographer each time it wants to use the shot?
- » Can the photographer sell images to outside parties, or does the organization want exclusive use?

Ideally, you want to sign agreements with photographers that give unrestricted, exclusive use of all images. But be prepared to pay more for the photographer's services if that is the case.

The Photo Session

You will save time and money with regard to the photo session if you plan ahead.

- » Make a list of the pictures you want. For pictures of people, arrange for a variety of poses.
- » Know who you need, where and when you need them, and what props will be required.
- » Notify people whose pictures are to be taken. Get releases, if needed (see Chapter 11).
- » Be sure that the location for the photo session is available, clean, and orderly.

- » Consider lighting. Will the photographer have everything needed, or should you make preparations?
- » Have everyone and everything at the right place at the right time.
- » Tell the photographer what you need, not how to do the job.

It's also a good idea to let individuals know that a photo shoot takes time; even a photo of an executive may take an hour or so to get the best results.

Cropping and Retouching

In most cases, the quality and composition of the photos can be improved through editing. The two primary techniques for editing photos are cropping and retouching. **Cropping** is editing the photo by cutting off parts of the picture that you don't want. Eliminating parts of the photo provides a tighter focus on the key elements. A photo of the CEO talking to a major stockholder, for example, may also include the waiter clearing a table at one side. It is relatively easy to "crop out" the waiter and any other surrounding background. In addition, it's usually a good idea to crop photos from the waist up. No one needs to see the shoes that the person is wearing.

The second technique, **retouching**, is usually done to alter the actual content of the photo. Let's assume that the photo just mentioned was taken in such a way that a basket of flowers on the stage behind the CEO looks like it is planted on top of his head. In such a situation, cropping may not be the answer, because it also would scalp the top of the CEO's head. The solution, of course, is to simply eliminate the flowers through "airbrushing," or digital manipulation.

Today, even amateurs can use software such as Adobe Photoshop to crop and retouch photographic images at will. Too much "red eye"? No problem. Is the background a bit dark or the sky not blue enough? With a few keystrokes, the problem is solved. Indeed, amateur photographers armed with digital cameras and software programs can manipulate and improve the quality of their photos with relative ease. Even expert photographers rely on Photoshop to electronically create the perfect picture.

Ethical Considerations

Cropping and retouching are common practices in photography, but there are increasing ethical and legal concerns about the boundaries of altering photographic images. An original photograph, for example, can be scanned or downloaded. An editor can then use photo editing software to make any number of alterations. For example, a person's dark suit can be changed to a light tan, and a shadow on a person's face can be removed. The editor can also change the background from a plain wall to an oak bookcase or even a desert by merging the photo with another one stored in the computer's memory. An output device generates the new image on a printed page.

Advertising and public relations people often use photo editing tools to enhance the quality of publicity photos. Thus, a company's board of directors is shown in front of the production line, even though the original photo was taken in a studio. Or, a new product is enhanced by blacking out the background and putting more light on the actual product.

The examples presented thus far are relatively harmless, but news editors continue to express deep concern about additional liberties that may be taken. A Chinese photographer, for example, received considerable international criticism for taking a photo of China's new high-speed train to Tibet crossing a trestle, and then doctoring it by adding a herd of rare antelope peacefully grazing nearby. The idea, of course, was to visually show how the train had not disturbed the wildlife habitat. One media critic said, "It's the perfect propaganda photo."

"In PR advocacy, you can choose whether to use photographs. If a photo doesn't meet your needs, don't use it. But once you decide to use it, don't alter it." Carri Jenkins, director of communications, Brigham Young University

As a public relations professional, you should be concerned about the digital manipulation of photos. You have a professional responsibility to honor the original photographer's work and not make alterations that would violate the integrity of the original photo.

When does a cosmetic correction become a violation of the photographer's copyright—or even an outright deception? Would you, for example, use a composite photo to show gender and racial diversity in your organization? If an altered photo misleads and deceives the public in a significant way, do not use it.

Susan Balcom Walton, a professor of public relations at Brigham Young University, suggests that public relations firms and departments should have a photo manipulation policy. Such a policy can be formed, she says, by first asking three questions:

1. Does the image alter reality?
2. Does the image intend to deceive in any way?
3. Has anything in the image been manipulated to imply endorsement of, or agreement with, your organization's views when that might not have been the photographer's or subject's intent?

Writing Photo Captions

All photos sent to the media need a **caption**. This is the brief text under the photo that tells the reader about the picture and its source. However, a caption is not a description of the photo. Some novice caption writers make the mistake of writing, "Pictured above..." or "This is a picture of..." or "Jane Doe is shown talking to..." Don't write the obvious; write to provide context and additional information not readily apparent from looking at the picture.

Most captions, when they accompany a news release, are two to four lines long. In fact, one study by Gallup Applied Science showed that two-line captions are the most effective. This guideline, however, does not apply to **photo news releases**. PNRs, as they are called, are simply photos with longer captions that are distributed to the media without any accompanying news release—the caption tells the entire story.

According to Deborah S. Hauss, writing in *PRWeek*, "Photo news releases enable PR pros to get pictures out more quickly and stand out amidst a sea of written press releases. . . . Sometimes all it takes to capture the media's attention is a visually compelling image and a short caption."

Regular captions and PNRs are written in the active, present tense. Don't write "The park gates were opened by Mayor Jones"; say instead, "Mayor Jones opens the park gates." Here are the first sentences of several photos used in this chapter that illustrate the use of active, present tense:

- » "Nathaniel Hipsman, 17, of Marietta, GA, a finalist at the Intel Science Talent Search (STS) displays his research ..." (Figure 8.3)
- » "Panasonic displays its 150-inch HD plasma, which it says is the world's largest, at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada." (Figure 8.5)
- » "An IBM technician assembles a 'multi-chip' module at the company's Poughkeepsie, NY, plant." (Figure 8.7)

A caption for a head-and-shoulders picture of a person (a mug shot) can be even shorter. The caption may be just the person's name. For full identification, you can also add the person's title and company; for example, "Douglas M. Schosser, director of finance, Associated Banc-Corp."

Captions for publicity photos of new products should include a key selling point. For example, the caption for a new Dell PC made the point that the product is primarily designed for medium and small businesses.

There is some argument about stating "from left to right" in a photo caption. To many people, this seems redundant, because people read copy—and probably scan photographs—from left to right anyway. If there are two or three people in the picture, it is assumed that you are identifying them from left to right. You can also indicate identity by the action taking place in the picture—for example, "John Baroni presents Nancy Southwick with a \$5,000 scholarship at the annual awards banquet."

In general, the most important person in the photograph should be the first person at the left side of the picture. This ensures that this person is mentioned first in the photo caption. The most important person may alternatively be in the center of the picture, surrounded by admirers. In this case, you can write, "Sharon Lewis, the singer, is surrounded by fans after her concert in Denver." Any reader should be able to figure out which person in the picture is Sharon Lewis.

However, the use of "left," "right," and "center" is perfectly acceptable if clarity is achieved. Here is the caption used under a photo of the top three winners of Intel's Science Talent Search competition:

First place winner Shivani Sud, 17, of Durham, NC (Center); second place winner Graham Van Schaik, 17, of Columbia, SC (Right); and third place Brian McCarthy, 18, of Hillsboro, OR (Left) celebrate winning the Intel Science Talent Search. Intel Chairman Craig Barnett presented the top winners with college scholarships of \$100,000, \$75,000, and \$50,000, respectively. These top award recipients were chosen from an applicant pool of more than 1,600 American high school seniors.

Creating Other Graphics

Photographs are not the only art form that you can use for publicity purposes. Charts, diagrams, renderings and models, maps, line drawings, and clip art are widely used. Many of these visuals can be formatted on your own computer using Microsoft Office, PowerPoint, or other software applications, but you should also consider using graphic artists and commercial illustrators. This is particularly true if you are preparing what is known as **infographics** for distribution to the media, which requires simple and well-designed, colorful graphics.

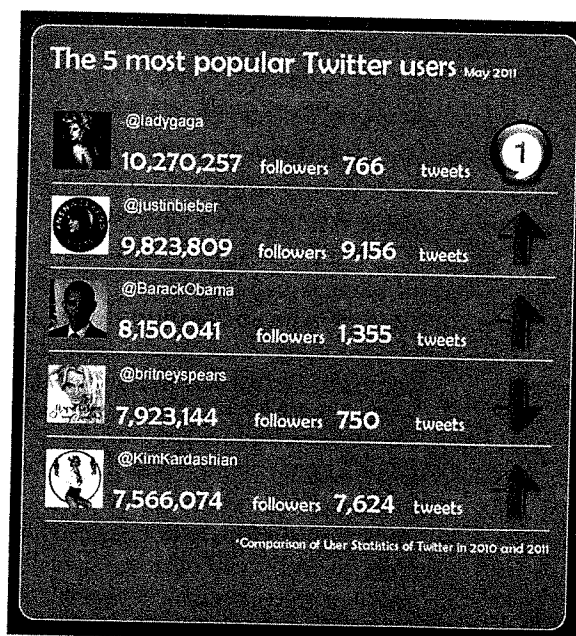
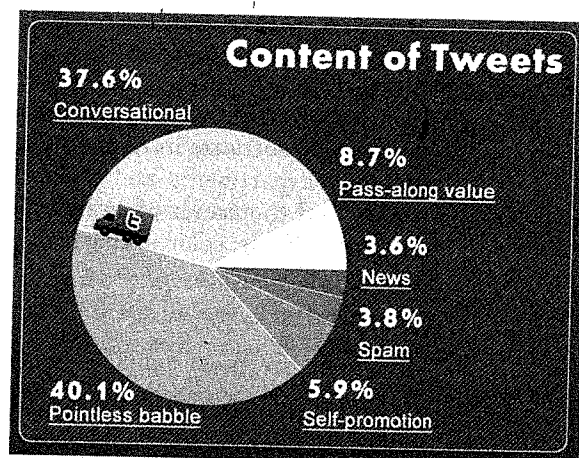
Charts

The primary reason for using charts is to make figures understandable. There are three basic charts for this purpose, and each seems to work best for certain kinds of information.

- » **Pie chart.** Ideal for showing what part of a total is used for each of several purposes. An organization may use such a chart to show how a budget or revenues are divided.
- » **Bar chart.** Ideal for showing comparisons between years in such things as income, population, sales, and prices.
- » **Graph.** Somewhat like a bar chart, but better suited for showing changes over a long period of time. A simple graph may track sales and profits in relationship to each other.

Today, charts are being dressed up with graphics so that they are more appealing and easier to understand. Reading a copy of *USA Today* makes the point. Instead of showing a simple bar chart or graph, an attempt is made to incorporate representations of the subject into the chart. Some examples of infographics are shown in Figures 8.8 and Figures 8.9.

FIGURE 8.8 Infographics that attractively portray data and statistics are now widely used by publications and social network sites. This shows some facts and figures about Twitter. (Copyright by Sebastiaan Laan, InfographicsArchieve.com)



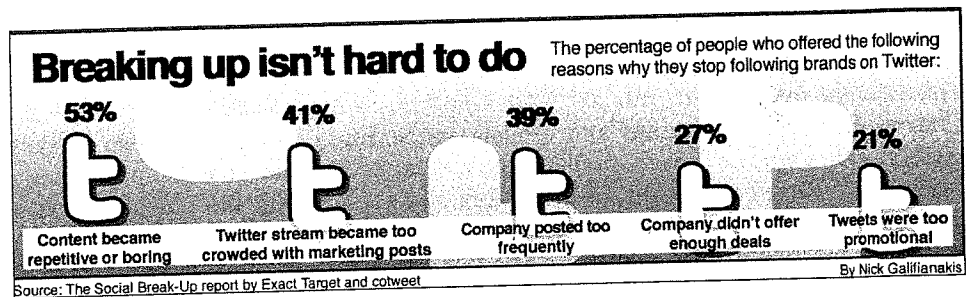


FIGURE 8.9 Percentages can be portrayed in interesting ways by using some creativity and visual elements to give readers an easy way to understand information. This infographic displays the various reasons why individuals stop following brands on Twitter.

Infographics can be prepared using Microsoft Office applications or more sophisticated software in Adobe's Creative Suite. Large dailies usually have their own graphics departments and make their own infographics. However, many smaller dailies and thousands of weeklies lack such capabilities and often are interested in receiving simple, colorful charts in addition to high-resolution photos.

Diagrams

Diagrams are most valuable in showing how something works. How an engine works, how an accessory should be attached, or how a product can be used can all be made clearer with a diagram.

In planning diagrams, you should not only check with the engineers, but you should also pretest the final diagram on potential readers for comprehension and understanding. The key to effective artwork, particularly diagrams, is simplicity.

Renderings and Scale Models

A rendering is an architect's drawing that shows how a finished structure will look. Increasingly, such artwork is being produced by computer drawing programs or photo editing software.

Photos of scale models are also used to give readers a thorough understanding of what is being built or renovated. Both renderings and scale models are widely used in news and feature stories about construction projects. Simple maps showing the location of a construction site or a new freeway ramp, for example, often accompany architectural drawings and photos. The availability of such artwork often makes the difference between a major news story and a brief mention.

Line Drawings and Clip Art

Cartoons are a form of line art, but most people think of line art as drawings of symbols, designs, and objects. These drawings are still made by artists using paper and ink, but the process is now available to almost anybody with a computer.

Barnaby Feder, a *New York Times* reporter, summarizes the state of the art as follows:

Today's PC graphics programs typically come with hundreds or even thousands of stored images, called clip art, which users can put into their graphics as building blocks. Photographs, shots from video clips and animation can be pasted in as well. Users can also choose from virtually infinite varieties of color and quickly change perspectives, shading, overlapping images and other features.

Adobe's Creative Suite includes stored **clip art** and the tools needed to create line drawings. Clip art can be ordered on CD or even downloaded from the Internet. Microsoft Office and Word Works also feature clip art. Another source of design templates and stock photos is Google Images (images.google.com). Line drawings and clip art are used primarily for organizational advertisements, leaflets, brochures, and newsletters.

Maintaining Photo and Art Files

A properly indexed photo and illustration file is a necessity. Without this, negatives, digital images, or artwork can be inaccessible for future use. The long-term employee who knows where everything is located and can remember the situation will eventually retire or take another job. In other words, don't rely on the collective memory of individuals to keep track of photos and artwork.

Digital photos should be stored on the organization's file server with readily identifiable tags. Corporate files may be identified by names such as "J. Jones, Chairman," or topical areas such as "Employee Recognition Banquet," "Grand Opening of Lansing Store," or "Scale Model of Springfield Office Bldg."

It is important to place all pertinent data in the file or a logbook. This may include (1) the date of the event; (2) when the photo was taken; (3) the location; (4) releases from people portrayed; (5) complete names and titles of people shown; and (6) the name and address of the photographer, including any restrictions on the use of the picture. A good file, which includes dates, will help you avoid the embarrassment of using outdated photos that show current employees at a much younger age or using photos of personnel who have left the organization.

Distributing Photos and Artwork

Digital technology makes it relatively easy to distribute photos and other artwork. However, several approaches are used. The first approach is to simply email a news release or an advisory to specific journalists or editors and let them know that you have photos and artwork if they are interested. You can offer four different formats: (1) a thumbnail, (2) a slightly bigger preview image, (3) a low-resolution version, and (4) a high-resolution (300 dpi) one.

An editor, for example, may just want to preview thumbnails and then order a specific photo. The main point to remember is to never send an attachment (photos or anything else) to an editor unless you are specifically asked to do so. The proliferation of viruses means that no editor will open an attachment unless he or she personally knows and trusts you.

A variation of this approach is to simply list a website in the news release where editors can download the photos and artwork. In many cases, journalists are given a special URL or link that allows them to access high-resolution photos that are not readily available to the general public. HP, for example, requires media to register for access to its "library." Ryan Donovan, HP's director of corporate media relations, told *PRWeek*, "You want to protect the brand so you have to know how those images that represent the brand are being used."

Another approach is to use an electronic distribution service such as Business Wire, PRNewswire, MarketWire, or Feature Photo Service. Editors receive daily feeds from these services that let them know what's being distributed and, with a few clicks, can download any story or related photo to their computers. In many cases, photos and graphics are embedded in the news release so editors can preview a thumbnail. If they like it, they can download a high-resolution copy with a few clicks. The concept of the multimedia news release was discussed in Chapter 5.

These distribution services also archive past stories and photos. This makes it easy for an editor to review all of the news releases and photos that Intel, for example, has distributed over a period of several years. Newscom is a particularly valuable resource; it maintains a searchable database of over 20 million images, graphics, and text from more than 100 photo agencies, wire services, and freelance photographers. Access to Newscom, however, is restricted to registered users and licensing fees are usually required.

Distribution, of course, also occurs online via social networking sites such as Facebook. It is important to tag photos (as well as news releases) with keywords so search engines can index them.

Summary

The Importance of Publicity Photos

- » Photographs and graphics add appeal and increase media usage of news releases or features.
- » Digital cameras are now used for publicity photos; such photos can be taken and distributed almost instantly.

Components of a Good Photo

- » A public relations writer should be familiar with the elements of a good publicity photo: quality, subject matter,

composition, action, scale, camera angle, lighting, and color.

- » Publicity photos should be sharp, clear, and high contrast.
- » Photos should be creative. Traditional pictures of "ribbon cuttings" or awards no longer work.
- » An award photo should have no more than three or four people in it. Save the large-group shot for the photo album.
- » Photos with action and informality are more interesting than rigid, posed shots.