

designYou

marketing



Guide to

CHOOSING & IMPLEMENTING PHOTOS
for your website



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INTRODUCTION

TO CHOOSING PHOTOS FOR YOUR WEBSITE

Welcome to Design You Marketing's Guide to Choosing and Implementing Photos for your website!

When choosing photos for your website, there are a lot of factors that you must consider. Your website is the storefront of your business. It must reflect your brand, your vision and your voice. You have about 4 seconds to connect with your audience and if they do not feel inspired to click or read on, then you will lose potential clients and leave money on the table. Choosing the wrong photos with the wrong placement in the wrong format with the wrong message can lead to visitors bailing out.

Design You Marketing has designed this guide to help you become an expert on

- ...choosing photos for your website that will speak to your audience,
- ...file types and compressing your images for faster loading time
- ...optimizing your photos for search engines
- ...brand relevance and color palettes
- ...the world of stock photography

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IMAGE RESOLUTION

WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

Between large files that have slow loading time and small files that are blurry and pixelated lies the perfect website image resolution.

Image resolution, more or less, is the pixel count of your image measured horizontally and vertically. You want your photos to be high quality, crisp, and engaging without being so large that your website does not load quickly. If a potential buyer/client is waiting too long for your website to load, they are going to move on rather quickly. Nevermind the fact that page load time can also affect your ranking in Google.

According to *Think With Google*, it doesn't take long for visitors to move on while waiting for a page to load. Their study showed the following:

AS PAGE LOAD TIME GOES FROM:

1s to 3s the probability of bounce increases 32%



1s to 5s the probability of bounce increases 90%



1s to 6s the probability of bounce increases 106%



1s to 10s the probability of bounce increases 123%



IMAGE RESOLUTION

WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

So then...what's next?

If you don't have Adobe Photoshop or another photo editing software that can allow you to resize your images, you can use free online tools to do so. (See Page 13 for a list of free helpful tools). Decreasing file sizes while maintaining quality is the goal. When choosing a size, keep in mind what size it will be displaying on your website. If it's a banner, it will be displaying a lot bigger than a thumbnail image.

Fortunately, if you are using platforms like Wix, they will compress the images for you and give you a cap on how big of an image you are allowed to upload. Before sizing and saving your images, research the best practices for the website platform you are using. That will give you an idea of the size you should make each type of photo.

"For best results, upload images of at least 2560 X 1440 pixels in resolution. Wix automatically optimizes your images for best online quality and fast download. This means that, unless your file is over 25MB, you do not need to resize or compress it before uploading."

WIX, <https://support.wix.com/en/article/site-performance-optimizing-your-media>

BRAND RELEVANCE

CHOOSE PHOTOS THAT CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

When building a brand, you want to emotionally connect with your target audience. The images on your website could be a big factor in that.

What emotions do you want to provoke from your visitors? What is the goal pertaining to the visitors? You should not pick photos at random just because they look nice. You should choose with intent.

Think about your ideal customer/client and how to connect with them. What do they think about? What is their pain? What motivates them? Write down a detailed description of your perfect client. Once you know them inside and out, you will be better equipped to choose photos that will resonate with them.

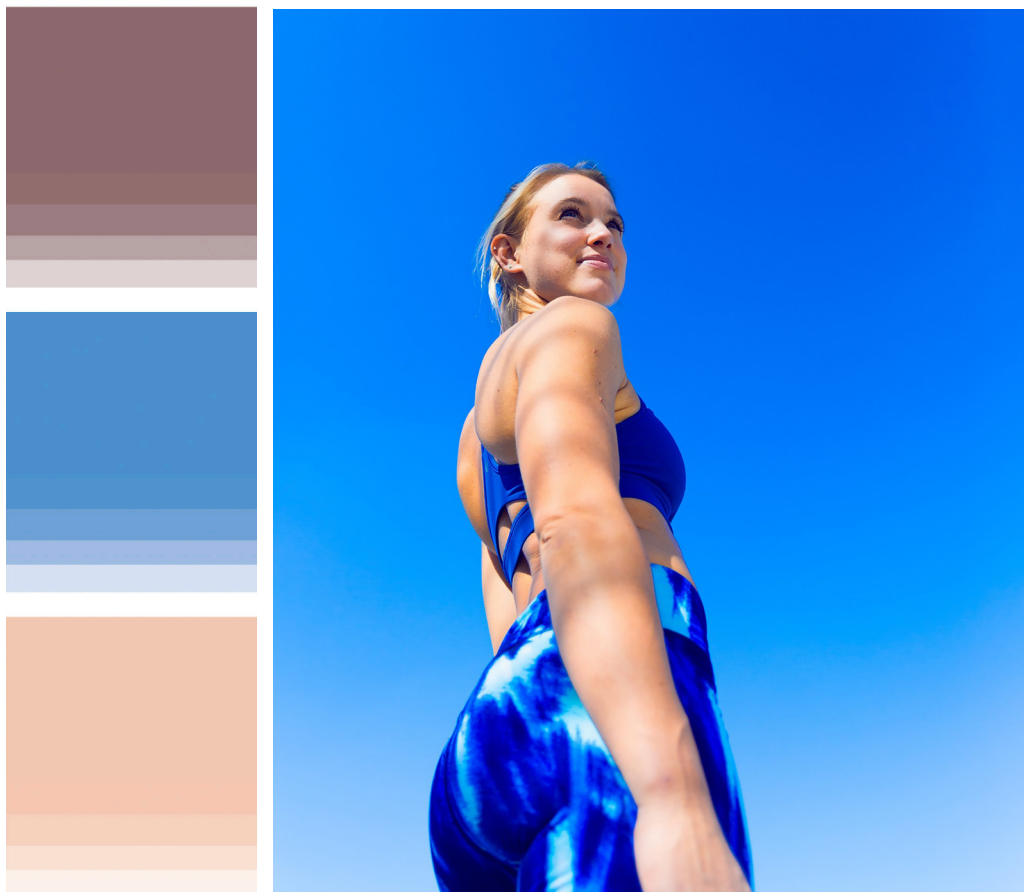


COLOR, CONTRAST, TONE

AESTHETICALLY PLEASING PHOTOS THAT MATCH YOUR COLOR PALETTE

Your photos should look like they belong on your website. Choose photos or have photos taken with your brand colors in mind.

The photos you choose should reflect the same color tones of your website color palette. This does not mean the images have to match your site colors exactly (although they can), it means they have to work well with the colors. Think tones, contrasts, hues, tints, and shades.



WORLD OF STOCK IMAGES

WHEN YOU SHOULD USE STOCK PHOTOS AND WHEN TO HOLD OFF

Stock photos or real photos...what should you do?

I would say, it is always best to use original photos on your website when and where you can especially for your “hero shot”. There are a lot of factors that come with making this decision. For example, do you have a budget that allows you to have professional photos taken for your website? (Professional photography can be expensive if you’re a new business owner and aren’t ready to invest.) Are you in an industry that is product focused? (You can’t really choose stock photography for products that only you manufacture). Are you in an industry that allows you to post photos? (Healthcare, Government-ITAR, Intellectual Property etc). I’ve put together some key things to think about pertaining to **stock photos**.

Stock Photo Pros

If you are just starting out and don’t have a budget for professional photos, stock photography is very inexpensive (or even free!)



WORLD OF STOCK IMAGES

WHEN YOU SHOULD USE STOCK PHOTOS AND WHEN TO HOLD OFF

Also, if you have time restraints and have a deadline for your web page going up, you may not have the time to schedule a photography session at that point. You also may not be able to set up a situation that you would like to express. Being able to search for that exact situation photo can save you a lot of time and money.

Stock Photo Cons

Although stock photos can be cost effective, you should try not to wallpaper your website with them. Too many stock photos can result in brand inconsistencies, not connecting well with your audience, and unoriginality. Also, keep in mind that if you use a stock photo, your competitors may be using the same photo or a similar one. Or, if it's a popular photo it may have been seen in 100 different places before and it may take away from your credibility through the eyes of the viewer.

If you are purchasing stock photos through a website, make sure you know what the licensing requirements entail. In other words, read the fineprint. **Never use a photo from the internet unless you know the usage rights.**

Summary

Original photos are better for branding. Your unique message can not be portrayed well through someone else's photos. But, stock photos can be used effectively as well if they need to be used. When choosing a stock photo, make sure it compliments your marketing strategy and reflects your brand. Try to make the photo look as unique as possible. (crop, add filters, add color/tones, text) Make it your own!

WHAT IS A HERO SHOT

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION IMAGE

Like other aspects of your website, your hero shot should be intentional and match your messaging.

The human brain processes images a lot faster than reading text. **Your hero shot is the first image that you see when you click on a website's home page or landing page.** This can hugely affect whether someone connects with your messaging or not.

When deciding on your hero shot (aka hero image), choose an image (or video) that speaks to your target audience, has a message that supports your product/services and brand, and is engaging. The message should be clear, concise, and engaging. It should convince your audience to take the next step so include a call-to-action.

A hero shot can display your products in use or the benefit of your services. If your expertise is the product, then you can use a professional photo of yourself. You should not use a photo that is purely decorative. Every photo you should choose with intent.

Check out some great examples of hero images in this article published by Canva:

<https://www.canva.com/learn/hero-images>

OPTIMIZING YOUR PHOTOS

FILE NAME, ALT ATTRIBUTES, FILE TYPES

Image Resolution is just one of the factors in optimizing your website photos, but that's not all.

Search engines don't only read the content that is published on your site, they also crawl through your *file names* and *alt attributes*.

File Names

It's important to name your image files with direct descriptions of the image. It's not helpful to people who are searching for your products or services if you leave your image file name something like *DSC1023894.jpg*. Think about what your potential customers/clients type in the search engines when they are looking for the products/services you offer. Then, look at the photo you are using and the intentions of that photo. Be concise and descriptive when naming your image files.

Alt Attributes

When embedding a photo onto your website page, you are given the option to add Alternate Text. Alternate Text (also known as an Alt Tag, Alt Attribute, or Alt Description) is text that is displayed if the image cannot be displayed or viewed. Like the File Name, the Alternate Text is read by search engines. The key to writing good alternate text for your photos is to be specific, descriptive, and refrain from adding a bunch of keywords that have nothing to do with the photo.

Image Type

The world of image types can be confusing. I'm sure you've heard of .JPG, .TIFF, .PNG, .EPS, .PDF, .NEFF and many more. But, what file type should you be using

OPTIMIZING YOUR PHOTOS

FILE NAME, ALT ATTRIBUTES, FILE TYPES

for the images on your website? Raster images are made of pixels and are used for anything being displayed digitally opposed to Vector images that are made up of dots and lines and can be easily scaled for different print applications.

RASTER IMAGES - *For Digital Use*

The two main file types that you will be working with when adding photos or graphics to your website are JPG and PNG. Although there are other types, these are the best ones for displaying your photos or graphics on your web pages.

JPG - *Joint Photographic Experts Group*

JPG's are mostly used for quality photographs. The great thing about JPG's is that they are significantly compressed which reduces the size and lets you to share high quality photographs online. When the size of a photo is reduced, this allows faster loading time on your webpages. Keep in mind when using JPG's, you do lose some data in the compression process which may affect future use. Although this is a positive attribute when you are trying to reduce size for loading times, always save the original photo for future applications.

PNG - *Portable Network Graphics*

PNG's also are compressed files like JPG's. PNG's can be used for photos, but are mostly used for web graphics and illustrations. Unlike JPG's, PNG's tend to take up more storage due to the fact that they save more information in the compression process than JPG's. A huge benefit of using PNG files is that you can save photos/ images with a transparent background.

SUMMARY

REVIEW & CHECKLIST

The ultimate goal is to connect with your audience through great visual representation of your company and brand.

All of the topics we've covered in this guide is to give you better knowledge on how to choose and implement the photos on your website and landing pages. This is not the moment where you upload a bunch of photos to decorate your website, but rather a moment where you consider your branding relevance, color scheme, optimization, and most importantly YOUR INTENT. If you have any questions, please feel free to email Sarah Conti, Founder of Design You Marketing at sarah@designyoumarketing.com.

Free Helpful Tools

Optimize your photos:	https://tinypng.com
Resize your photos:	https://express.adobe.com/tools/image-resize
Image converter tools:	https://www.adobe.com/express/feature/image/convert
Design banner and graphics:	https://www.canva.com
Stock photos:	https://unsplash.com
Color Palette Generator:	https://colors.co