

The Website Owner's Guide to Stock Photography



**Learn How to Use Stock Photography to
Enhance Your Websites & Make Your
Online Efforts Stand Out From The Crowd!**

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Introduction

Adding stock photography to content on Internet sites is like putting jewelry on an already beautiful woman. It enhances what's already there and does just a bit more to make it sparkle and shine.

If you're an Internet marketer who is using or wants to use photography to help explain or to dress up your site(s), there are a few things you should know. For example, just because you may find a photo online doesn't mean that it's legal to use it.

This guide will outline what you should know about using stock photography in your online content. Covered in the guide are the types of photography stock sites you can access (including royalty free, public domain and paid) and how to use them for commercial or personal use.

Various licensing and usage issues are also addressed as are getting permission for a copyright. Terms are explained – such as “fair use,” image placement and exclusivity.

There are plenty of cheap stock photography sites online, but you'll learn why using cheap or often-used photos may downgrade your site rather than enhance it with quality photography.

You'll also learn how to choose expert photography rather than badly cropped and overexposed photos. After you know how to choose photography for your site, you'll want to know how to use it for maximum impact.

Learn all the ways you can use stock photography in your blogs, websites, social media sites, newsletters, sales letter and more. There's so much to know about using stock photography online that you'll want to keep this guide handy to look at during times you're unsure.

Just as ethics are an important part of Internet marketing, they're also important to photographers wanting to sell their creations – and to marketers who want to be careful about misrepresenting a product or service using stock photography.

If you're a photographer, you'll also find this guide helpful when advertising or building a site for your photos. You'll want to know the ins and outs of selling to Internet marketers and the legalities involved.

Chapter 1

What is Stock Photography?

Stock photography is defined as a supply of photographs that are licensed for particular uses. Using stock photography helps to lower costs because they're readily available rather than having to hire a photographer.

Today, the Internet makes it possible to search for and find stock images easily and quickly. Interested clients can purchase them and have them delivered online and then use them in a variety of ways.

Common stock photography includes photos involving people, pets and scenery such as that related to tourism and travel. There are also photos available that are meant to illustrate an idea.

These photos are called conceptual photography – an early example of which would be Hippolyte Bayard's, "Self Portrait as a Drowned Man," taken in 1840.

During the 1960s, a movement called "Conceptual Art" became popular, but today it is considered a genre or methodology.

Before delving into the presence of stock photography and the future of it in our everyday lives and in helping to grow businesses, it's important to know a bit of the history of stock photography and how it evolved to become an important tool in online businesses.

The Importance of Stock Photography in History

It wasn't too long ago that what we know as stock photography came on the scene. Newspapers and magazines began using photographs rather than line drawings in the mid-1880s because of the amazing invention of the half-tone printing press.

In the beginning, newspapers and magazines sent out staff photographers to take the photos they would later use. Then, free-lance photographers made their mark in a big way and stock photography has never looked back.

During the 1980s, stock photography enjoyed a movement of popularity by freelance and hobby photographers. The 1990s saw a time of acquisitions by Getty and Corbis – two large companies who saw the profits to be made from this type of photography.

By the year 2000, it was obvious with the availability of the Internet that stock photography was going to become even more popular in the coming years.

Istockphoto, a website where images could be exchanged made royalty-free photos affordable.

Affordable photos are now possible because of high-resolution digital cameras available to the mass market and opened the path for amateur photographers to share and upload their photos on a website.

Today, the goals of stock photography are shifting to focus on providing all photographers with a sustainable career and to further the availability of authentic and useful images for everyone, including online entrepreneurs.

Types of Stock Photography

There are three types of stock photography that you should know about before you begin the search for photos that will fit your needs. They range from very expensive to low priced. They include:

1. **Macro stock photography** – Macros are exclusive and expensive and photos.
2. **Mid-stock photography** – Priced between macro- and mid-stock photography.
3. **Micro-stock photography** – All inclusive stock photos that are low priced.

So, when you're shopping for stock photos and visit a site that offers macro stock photos, you'll know that they will be more expensive, but the exclusivity means that you won't see them repeated on other sites.

Photographers file their images with an agency that will negotiate licensing fees for the photographer and take a percentage of the fee. Some agencies purchase the images from the photographer and don't deal with fees and percentages.

Rights-managed stock photography is an individual licensing agreement that's negotiated for each use the purchaser may have. Royalty-free stock photography allows the purchaser of the photo to use it many times for one license fee.

A purchaser of photos may also obtain exclusive rights which prevent anyone else from using the image either for a specific amount of time or within the same industry.

Free, low-resolution photos can be obtained for demonstrating a design for an advertiser. These are high-resolution images which can then be purchased directly from the website of the advertiser.

The New Venue of Stock Photography

Because of the tremendous advancements in sensor technology photographers now create images that can compete with the most advanced macro lenses. Now, macro photos are more readily available and less expensive. Today, a macro photo must be of a vertical subject and a height of 24 mm (or less).

Stock photographers of today have lots of questions about the future of stock photos. Can money be made with licensing stock images? Is it difficult to sign with an agency? What is next in technology advances and how people use stock photos?

All are good questions and most can be answered with what we know today about how stock photography has evolved over the past few years. Thanks to the Internet, more images are being called for by Internet marketers and others who simply want to have a presence on the 'Net.

Social media sites are also clamoring for stock photos to enhance their sites and many types of photos are demanded. Microstock – lower priced and royalty free images – is emerging as a popular venue for photographers to make additional money and for online users of photography to find exactly what they want for their sites and other uses.

Hobbyists and professional photographers are discovering that certain types of photos can become best-sellers. Those that can be used by advertisers are popular with online marketers and they're purchasing both traditional stock and microstock photos.

Traditional stock photos are highly specialized and are usually provided by professional photographers, although with today's technological advances in cameras, amateurs can easily list traditional stock photos too.

Most photographers make the decision to do both. Ensuring that photo content is in both venues is a good way to make a name for the photographer – and it's also good for the Internet marketer who may be willing to spend more on an exclusive, specialized photo than one used by many.

Using online stock photography doesn't have to be difficult. There are a few simple rules that Internet marketers need to know before they make a decision about purchasing copyright permission to use a photograph and the next chapter deals with those ins and outs.

Chapter 2

Legalities of Using Online Stock Photography

Stock photos can get super expensive to use in your online marketing pursuits and the legalities of using them are sometimes confusing. And, some marketers use inappropriate photos or don't know how to use them, causing you to shake your head when you see them embedded in a blog or website.

Stock photos can add interest and definition to your content. It's said that a picture is worth a thousand words and for your clients it means that learning time is lessened if you can see a visual image rather than a wordy explanation.

There are also free stock photography sites which offer various images that they've contracted for with the photographer. This helps the photographer because they have a central place to show their creations.

Online photography sites also help marketers because they can choose from a wide variety of photos and not have to bother with copyright forms and the legal issues of using photos for online content.

Before you decide on which stock photography you will use in your online content, there are some legalities you should know about. These legal matters might affect both the expense of the photo(s) and how you may use them.

One of the most asked questions by Internet marketers is, "How do I get copyright permission to use a photo?" Most sites make it easy for you, but there are legal issues you should know about before using a photo in your content.

How to Get Permission to Use a Stock Photo

Expert photos are a great way to make your content stand out and to make a point that only a picture can accomplish. Creators of photographs retain the copyright to a photo – but you can ask for a release unless the person who owns the photo wants to use it for certain products. Then, you must ask for copyright permission.

Using a search engine such as "Google Images" can show you various shots of anything you can imagine, but if you use one, it may violate a copyright. Photographers do have ways and tools to find out if photo copyrights have been violated – such as TinEye.

If you use copyrighted photos without permission, it could become very expensive, not to mention embarrassing. When you see a photo you want to use, you should first get in touch with the studio or photographer who created the photo and ask for copyright permission. If agreement is reached, follow these instructions:

- **Pay for the copyright release** – Images of portrait work could cost \$25 per image and images for marketing or business applications could cost over \$100 per image.
- **Obtain an original copy of permission form** – Also, be sure the form has an original (ink) signature.
- **Purchase a print copy of the photo** – You'll use the print to list the items on the release form.

Many copyright release forms are very complicated in nature and can include specifics that may be difficult to understand for the lay-person. Remember that a copyright isn't meant for you use the image in any way you want.

Read the release form carefully before you use the image you retained a copyright for.

Free Sites for Stock Photography

Obtaining the copyright of a photo that's perfect for your online site(s) might be the route you want to take if you find one that's the perfect one. But, there are also free images available in 'libraries' of stock photos.

These photos have been obtained from a photographer who has sold or given away some or all of their legal rights. Some you can use commercially and others have stipulations about how you can use them.

This is an excellent way for a photographer to make money by selling his images to a central location where many people will see his work. Here are just some of the free online libraries you can use to search for free stock images.

- **Openphoto** – Since 1998, Openphoto has been building a valuable collection of stock photos. The site is categorized and easy to use.
- **Stock.XCHNG** – One of the best sites for obtaining free photos, Stock.XCHNG offers as many as 400,000 images that include every topic.
- **Morguefile** – This photo site provides an exceptional search tool that lets you filter the photos by keywords, size, color and categories.

- **Stockvault.net** – While the collection of photos on this site is smaller than some, they're of extremely high quality. You can also find clip art, logo templates, backgrounds and textures.
- **Free Photos Bank** – If you're in need of standard photos of animals, landscapes and people, this is a good site to look. No registration is required and you simply download the photos you want.
- **Freerange Stock** – You'll find a good supply of stock photography for both commercial and non-commercial needs. The photos are supplied by in-house professionals who focus on quality rather than quantity and are highly creative.
- **From Old Books** – There are over 3,000 images designated for public domain and that have been scanned from books. This site requests that you notify them of use and link to their website if you use one of their images.

It's true that free stock photography offers a wide range of photographs for almost every need. They also help amateur and professional photographers by providing a venue for their creativity.

One word of caution – be sure and read the fine print on the sites that feature “free” stock photos. There may be terms that you need to know about such as limitations and licensing.

Chapter 3

Understanding Stock Photography Rights

If you're using a free stock photo site, you don't have to worry about the rights to the photo because that's already been addressed between the photographer and the stock photo website owner.

But, if you want to pay for and use a unique photo, you should know about the various types of stock photo licenses available and what they mean. Some will give you more rights than others.

Various Types of Stock Photo Licenses

- **Flat Fee License** – This license is issued if there is one user (end user) and won't be licensed again – even by the photographer.
- **Royalty Free** – When you obtain a Royalty Free license you can use the image over and over again until the specified contract time is over. But others can continue to purchase the image, so it won't be exclusive. Royalty free licenses aren't expensive and you can use them for more purposes than other types of licenses.
- **Rights-Managed** – This license gives the buyer exclusive, but time-limited usage of a photo. The advantage to the photographer means that he or she can protect the photo from other competitors. Right's managed images are somewhat expensive, but it's best if you want to use a photo for a specific purpose.
- **Enhanced or Extended** – This type of license gives you an extension for the use of a photo. The uses might include resale purposes such as for print-on-demand or other types of distributions and uses. Be sure you read this agreement in detail so you know exactly what the details are.

When a photographer takes a photo, he's the one who holds all rights to that photo and is considered the owner. Therefore, he has the right to sell, keep the photo or license it to someone interested in using the photo.

How to Get Permission to Use Stock Photos

Finding the best photos for your website can be a daunting experience. You need to know the basics about how to get permission to use an image you find and want to use to avoid problems later on.

Even though the Internet offers a bundle of photos you can use, that doesn't mean that all of them belong to a giant photo database. There are guidelines you should know.

There are some things you should know before you use a photo without permission and find yourself in trouble later on. For example, here are some types of designations you might need to know about:

- **Copyrighted** – Don't use a photo with this designation without permission. A photo that's copyrighted means that the author (usually the photographer) has exclusive rights to the work. It's illegal to use the photo unless you get the photographer's permission.
- **Copyright-free** – When a photo is designated "copyright-free" it means that they're probably safe to use for your purposes. Be sure and read the terms and conditions before you use it.
- **Open License** – This label indicates that the person who holds the copyright license can grant reprint usage. Creative Commons is the most common type of open licensing for images.
- **Public Domain** – Public domain images have no legal owners. When copyrights reach their expiration dates and were never renewed, it automatically becomes public domain or if images were first published in the U.S. Before 1923.

If an image has a notice that says, "this work is dedicated to the public domain," it's usually okay to republish it without seeking permission.

There are public sites that are considered "Free Online Image Banks," which means that you can use the images for free and for any purpose. They're copyright-free and offer much less hassle.

You'll find a list of some of the Image Banks in Chapter 2, "Understanding Stock Photography Rights."

Photo Copyright Infringement

An infringement of copyright can be serious if you inadvertently use a photo without permission. An infringement means that you've violated the rights of the creator – and there are several ways this can happen.

For example, if you use part of an image or the entire image without permission, you would have violated the photographer's rights. And, if you don't fully understand the license agreement, you could find yourself accused of a copyright infringement.

So many changes can be performed on a photo today with all of the tools we enjoy on the Internet – such as Photo Shop. If you adapt an image for your own use without permission, you could be infringing on a copyright agreement.

Never ask another photographer or use a tool such as Photo Shop to recreate or change an image unless you have permission to do so. You will be responsible for the repercussions of an infringement whether you've knowingly or unknowingly violated a copyright agreement.

Employees or anyone associated with the actual infringement could also be responsible and face fines or other legal problems. If a person authorized or encouraged you to use the image without permission, he or she may also be considered responsible.

If you're deemed to be the one responsible for the copyright infringement, you could face a lawsuit, monetary damage, legal fees and in some circumstances face criminal charges.

You may think, "How could anyone possibly know that I used the photo in the big, wide world of the Internet?" Actually, anyone can find out very easily now that there's technology that lets the owners of the images track down their photos and even report if they've been modified or if part of it is being used.

Be aware that infringing the copyright of an image by using it online before you know you can legally use it could cause you serious problems.

Chapter 4

Making Your Content Stand Out with Stock Photography

Stock photography is experiencing a boon thanks to the demand for unique photography on websites, blogs and other types of sites. But, just as you may not want to be seen at a party with the same outfit as someone else – you don't want to use the same photos to enhance your content as other Internet marketers are using.

Fortunately, there is a wide variety of sites for finding just the right photo(s) – and there are some things you should know about taking a stock photo that you may get from a free site and making it stand out so it doesn't look like all the others.

You don't have to pay hundreds of dollars for a professional photographer to take special photos for you. Nor do you have to bother with copyright or licensing documents and fees.

With a little creativity and sometimes a little help from the vast array of free tools available to you online, you can make an impact on your site with any stock photo you find. You can make it look like an image that was designed and created especially for you.

Here are some tips that are fun and creative that can help you transform a stock photo into one that reflects your own style and creativity:

- **Learn how to crop photos** – There may be elements in a stock photo that you've decided to use that you really don't need or that would look better removed from the image.

It's so easy to crop photos using just about any platform you choose. Focus on the area of the photo you think is best for your needs and then crop the rest out to make an ordinary stock photo come alive.

- **Use special effects** – You can turn any photo into a work of art by using various photo-editing techniques. For example, after cropping a photo, you can soften it by blurring the background image, causing the foreground to stand out more.

You can easily make any stock photo image look like an oil painting, a pencil drawing or an antique photo by using various special effects techniques to make it look more original and interesting.

- **Think about your image** – When choosing a stock photo and changing it to meet your style, think about the image that you want to portray online. For example, if you're all about fashion, you may want to choose or create a hip, chic photo image.

You need an image that will echo the overall message that you're trying to get across to visitors to your site, blog or other types of content. Stock photos should always enhance your work rather than take away from its meaning and message.

- **Stay away from face shots** – When people are seeing the same face over and over again and see it on your site too, they tend to be turned off. The previous site where they've seen the model's face may have hyped something you'd rather not be associated with.

Dig a little deeper and you can probably find a stock photo that you can live with and use successfully.

- **Look at lots of photos before choosing one** – Don't just take the first photo you come to that sort of fits what you want. Look farther into the stock photo files.

For example, if you're writing about finances, don't just choose a dollar sign, even though it may fit the purpose. But, everyone is using that for their sites. Choose something more descriptive of the content.

- **Highlight aspects of the photo** – To move beyond cropping a photo, you could use the technique of highlighting a certain area of the image and thus create a different focal point.

Your creativity of highlighting what you want to focus on will draw the viewer's eye to exactly what you want them to see.

- **Create a collage from several stock photos** – Collages are effective means of communication. It makes the viewer want to linger longer on the photos to see what's there.

All a collage involves is cutting and pasting. You can add lines, shadow certain areas or creating a puzzle effect.

- **Create a new image from one or more photos** – There's so much you can do with various elements in a photo to make it look completely different and new. Play with the images to see what works.

For example, on a face shot, you could use a mouth from one image and eyes from another.

- **Use color effectively** – Color is a great medium to play with. You can create an antique-looking image by using sepia tone or turn a colored one into black and white for a totally different look.

Use color to create overlays, add touches here and there on a plain photo and other methods to make your stock photo images stand out.

One thing to remember when changing or cropping photos is to first find out if the site or photographer where you got the stock photos allows this type of changes to their original work.

When you're working in the confines of a tight budget, using stock photos creatively can help give your blog or website a whole new look – and one that you can easily afford.

Tips on Using Stock Photos Effectively on Your Blog or Website

If you're creative, stock photos can be very effective in increasing interest in your online content. Look at best-selling book covers and see how the publishers are using photos, rather than drawings or sketches, to make the covers stand out.

The old saying goes, "Don't judge a book by its cover," but when you're searching for a new and interesting one, you likely grab it off the shelf according to a cover that catches your eye. Then, if you like the subject matter and content, you purchase the book.

It's the same with your online content. If someone enters your site and it looks boring, it's likely they won't hang around. There are some effective ways you can use free stock photos to grab your visitors' interest and compel them to read on. Here are a few tips:

- **Use captions** – Adding text to add to the meaning of a photo is an old trick of the trade that compels people to linger and read about the photo or the meaning of the photo they're looking at.

You can also place text within the photo by adding speech bubbles or use text and colors that stand out and make that standard photo really work for you.

- **Photoshop** – Adobe's Photoshop is an editing program that helps you change the images in photos to more express the meaning you want to get across.

If you don't want to pay for a software program, try some of the many photoshop brushes that are free and that you can use to somewhat change a stock photo's image.

- **Break up content** – Rather than have line after line of text on your blog or website, break it up with an interesting or useful photo. Be sure that it relates to the content.

Not only does breaking up text with a photo make the content more interesting – it also makes what you're saying more memorable. Sometimes a picture truly is worth a thousand words.

When you add a photo that's interesting and better explains the text you've added, your ability to attract attention surges. Readers will likely look at the picture to get an idea of the content before they even read a word of what you've written.

Using photos throughout the content also tends to keep your audience's attention focused on the point you're trying to make. It's an easy way to make your content stand out from others.

Chapter 5

How to Avoid the Pitfalls of Using Cheap Stock Photography

Free or cheap stock photography might be detrimental to what you're trying to achieve with your blog, website or other content. As use of images becomes increasingly important to the message we want to convey, it also becomes imperative that we take care with the photography we use to convey it.

There are pitfalls that you should avoid at all cost so that your website or content doesn't become boring or cliché. You don't want to turn off a visitor to your site because of a bland or uninteresting photo.

Website designers are sometimes sent a collection of photos and are told to use them in the design the best way possible. It's a bad way to use the budget designated for the designer and doesn't give him or her creative ability to fashion an incredible – rather than a mediocre – website.

Whether you're designing the content yourself or handing it over to an experienced web designer to create, you'll want to avoid certain pitfalls when using stock photography. Among the pitfalls are:

- **Using photos that don't match the content** – It's confusing to the reader when you use a photo that has nothing whatsoever to do with the content of the site.

One of the best examples of this pitfall is a photo of a handshake. If you have a website that's geared to children's toys, it doesn't make sense. Try and use photos that are unique and that reinforce the message you're trying to send.

- **Using cheap, low-resolution photos** – You won't be doing your site a favor if you use cheap photos to save money. The impact of a photo on your site is monumental, and using photos that doesn't meet the standards you want to set for your site is a bad decision.

A good web designer will tell you bluntly that you're making a mistake in using a photo that doesn't fit the size for your design and ends up a highly-pixeled photo that looks unfit for the site.

- **Using photos that are over-used** – Smiling children, the 'handshake' photo and others are vastly overused online. To really make your content and your site standout, you need to choose unique photos that help tell the story of your website.

One way to know if the photos you're using are clichéd or overused is to look at other sites – particularly those of your competitors.

- **Choose memorable images** – Rather than a quick search through photos to find something that suits your content, also look for a photo that has the ability to stun.

We all remember the Afghan girl's eyes in the photo that National Geographic used for its cover a few years ago. Those eyes symbolized the struggle of the Afghan people and we're not likely to forget it.

You may not be able to achieve that type of stunning image, but keep it in mind when looking for something memorable and attention-getting.

- **Using badly cropped or clipped photos** – You've surely seen photos on a site that look like a bad "cut and paste" job. It's obvious that the person was hurrying or too lazy to place them properly.

Randomly dropping various clipped or cropped photos into a website doesn't make it desirable to look at. Even if the subject matter relates to the content – it doesn't make a good impression if it's placed in a sloppy way.

- **Using outdated photos** – If you have a website that caters to women's hair products and use an image that depicts an old hairstyle, it's a bad image for your reputation.

Outdated clothing, cars and other telling signs that the photo is clearly from the past adds nothing to your website's content and likely won't convey the message you're trying to send.

- **Photo-shopping your own product into a photo** – Unless you're really good at using the tools of Photoshop, you probably shouldn't try to sneak in your own product on a popular image.

Tell-tale signs of this can be obvious to the reader and destroy the image – and the message you're trying to convey.

When using stock photography, just be sure you use it correctly and wisely, no matter what you paid for it. It's better to pay a designer to choose the correct pieces of art and imagery than to do a poor job of choosing and distributing it yourself.

Avoid Being a Generic Website

One of the major reasons not to use cheap stock photography for the content on your blog, website or other use is that you face the danger of becoming generic. Most of the highly usable, cheap stock photos have been used many times before

and are becoming boring to the new wave of audiences who desire fresh and different.

Besides increasing your budget (which may not be an option) so that you can afford better quality of images, there are some other steps you can take to ensure the quality of the stock photos you use.

Good quality and style can be found in inexpensive stock photos, but you've got to make the necessary commitment to finding them. The best person to do that is you.

You alone know the reputation you want to build, the message you want your audience to take away and how to identify with your customers. The future for of your business is determined in part by the image and content of your site(s), so take particular care in setting your site apart from all others.

You'll have visitors to your site or blog not knowing a thing about you or your product and what you present will set the premise for what they think about you. The content and images should reflect the uniqueness of you and your product or service.

When a new visitor clicks on a link to your site or seeks you out for other reasons, you'll want him to linger, explore and buy. The best way to achieve that purpose is to choose excellent photos that reflect the idea of your site. Here are some tips in choosing photos wisely:

- **Be specific** – Use specific images that look as if they were specially created for your site. A photo that portrays a generic shot of something that doesn't relate to you or the site is a waste of time, money and space on the website.
- **Be consistent** – Using a variety of shots that portray very different objectives can be confusing to the reader. For example, if you have a photo of a plate of food and another of a family out in the park, it's difficult to find the relevancy by simply looking at the photos.
- **Use a relevant background** – If you're targeting an audience who lives in the mountainous and snowy Alps, using photos set with the background of the Arizona desert doesn't accurately mirror your target customers.

One way to keep from becoming a generic, run-of-the-mill website is to know who your audience is. Even if your website isn't up and running yet, you know what you're attracted to – what keeps you on a site and urges you to buy.

Use stock photos on your site that you would like to see if you were a first time – or hundredth time visitor and your sites are sure to stand out from the fray. Look at other sites that you admire and you'll quickly find the creative thread that runs through all of them.

Creating a Silk Purse from a Sow's Ear

There are good stock photos out there – and very bad ones. But, most have redeemable features that can be culled out of the overall photo and made into something grand.

For example, the eyes of a person in a photo might be compelling, but the rest of the photo may take away from the concept you want to pass on to your audience. The power that the image has to make an impact on a visitor to your site is monumental and photos should be carefully chosen for a job.

Let the photos you choose or change for your sites tell a story. People can read stories, but the true vision doesn't come into play unless there's a photo or other type of image accompanying it.

Think about trying to describe our Earth to an alien who's never been here. Even if it knew the meaning of the words, it would have a difficult time visualizing the actual place without the use of photos or drawings.

The same is true if you're attempting to explain a new concept or product to a visitor to your site. The visitor will be much more likely to understand and appreciate what you're trying to convey if it's accompanied by images.

When you use appropriate stock photos to incorporate into the design of your websites, you're adding interest and explanation that's beyond what you could do with all the words in the world.

By all means, don't use bad photos to try and make a good site better. Either look for photos that are worthy of the quality of your site, enlist a photographer to help with the design or learn how to change bad photos into great ones by using some of the great tools found on the Internet.

Chapter 6

Choosing Stock Photos to Drive Traffic

If you use stock photos properly, you can easily optimize them to have the most positive effect on SEOs. Just be sure that you use photos that relate to the content. For example, you wouldn't want an image of a crock pot on your site if you're selling toys.

Most marketers concentrate on keywords as part of their SEO strategy, but a properly used photo can make all the difference – especially when you use modern linking tactics.

Often ignored is how our sites can get loads of traffic and show up in Google's search results for images. There are some strategies you should know about before you can be successful in driving traffic with images.

Tools to Make Driving Traffic with Images Successful

The number one thing you need to do before using an image to drive traffic to your site is to think about what the image will achieve before choosing it. For example, if your site has to do with gardening you'd want to choose the landscape or flower gardening photo over one that depicts children or animals.

Here are a couple of strategies that might be helpful when choosing photos to drive traffic to your site:

- Don't choose unnatural images that don't really depict what you're trying to project. Images that don't result in traffic are bland such as a group of children on a playground. Make the image specific to the content.
- Don't use 'overused' photos. You can find out information about the usage of photos by entering a google search for keyword phrases and note if a photo shows up more than a couple of times.

After you select a photo, you should think about captioning (describing) it so that search engines will be sure to pick it up. Use very descriptive language rather than a simple description.

Google also uses the description in the file name you assign to find out more information about the image. Rather than arbitrary keywords, use highly descriptive ones that truly express what the photo is all about.

Another tool that works is anchor text. This is the text that appears when other sites or pages are linked to the image. Again, the anchor text should be very descriptive. Although you won't have any say about the other sites that link to you, you have absolute control over your own sites. Backlinks can help give you more control, so adding them to the image can also help.

Another way to use photos for driving traffic to your site is to use carefully selected photography as content. You can achieve this by using the photos with non-visual text or with an audio creation.

Using photography as the content of a site can help draw attention to the content. It's a well known fact that flowing blocks of online text makes the viewers want to scan the content rather than engage in detailed reading of it.

Photos break up that text-monotony and also help to tell the reader what's going to be found in the article or site. One of the main problems marketers deal with is visitors that enter the site and quickly leave. Photos can be the eye-catching 'grabber' that makes them linger – and possibly buy.

Google Image Search – SEO Common Sense

It doesn't have to be difficult to optimize your photos for a positive google search for your site or content. What you need to remember is really just common sense if you know how a google search works. Here are some steps that will become second nature to you as you continue to use images successfully:

1. **Descriptive filenames** – Using keywords in your image filenames can mean the difference in a positive google search – or not. A highly descriptive word or a short phrase that accurately describes what the image is all about can do wonders to ensure that a search reaches your site.
Also, using dashes (-) inserted between the words is read by google as a space and lets the filename be easily interpreted by a google search.
2. **Alt tags** – Using an alt tag in your image's link code will give you more room for using keywords to describe the photo. Google will recognize the alt tag in the search result, which helps it distinguish your filename from others in the search results.
3. **Google Image Labeler** – This is a fun way to improve your chances of being found in a google search. The Google Image Labeler is actually a game that you play with another member.

The two of you collaborate in writing tags for the images you want to present. You each receive points when you submit tags that match, the tags are assigned to the photos (images) and will be considered by Google Image Search for their search results.

You can go to the management page for your site on Google's Webmaster Central account and click the link to "Enhanced Image Search." Clicking this

link lets Google know that you are now letting them use tools like the Image Labeler to help index the photos on your site.

The steps above are simple and will help to get your photos ranked in the Google Image Search, which is an excellent way to drive traffic to your site.

Chapter 7

Know the Ethics of Using Stock Photography

Ethical online entrepreneurs are usually conscientious about using another person's content – that's clearly known as plagiarizing. But, some online marketers aren't nearly as discerning when using photographs or images that they 'lift' from another site.

The difference between using a photo and using someone else's content isn't as clear as it should be. With photos there are licensing and copyright laws that impact the use of someone else's property. But, clarifying ownership of the photo is where the confusion arises.

For example, if you worked as a photographer for a magazine, but never signed a contract stating that the magazine had rights to the photo – is it yours to sell? You may have even used your own camera and other equipment.

You sell the photo online and it's used by an online marketer, but it's still unclear who owns the rights to the photo, so a problem may arise from the magazine questioning your ownership of the photo and the marketer's right to use it online.

The legal obstacles you'll encounter may land you in court. It's best to know the ethical boundaries of using or selling the copyrights to stock photos before attempting to do so. It's also in your best interest (if you're selling photos) to have a clear understanding about who owns the photos from the beginning.

Finding Ethical Images

If you're going to use photos or images on your site or blog, you should know how the reproduction rights work – or, know the images you are allowed to use and those that should definitely not be used.

Rather than simply lifting images from another site by using the quick, Google Images search tool, there are ways you can find out which images are suitable and can be used without the thought of repercussion from the photographer or the owner of the images.

If you think that no one will notice that you used an image that you lifted from another site – think again. Owners of images have ways to check on their copyrighted photos to see if they've been used when they shouldn't have been. Acting ethically when reproducing photos for any purpose is the best path to take.

You should know that to use a photo ethically, the owner of the image must have allotted you the express permission to use it. This can be done in one of several ways, including contacting the creator directly or you can use images that are in public domain.

There is a grey area in using public domain images that involves whether the images have been scanned or digitized in some way from a public domain site. The original image might be the one in public domain while the digitalized version is not.

Types of Images That Are Ethical to Use

High quality images that can be perfect for your website or other areas of your Internet pursuits can be found through several ethical methods. Sites that can be resources for your photos are clear about how the image can be used. If there is no reference to the image, you should assume that you have no ethical right to its use.

Here are some great sites from which you can perform searches for images you need:

- **Creative Commons** – creativecommons.org isn't a search engine, but it is a non-profit site where you can access other search services that are available from independent organizations.

What you can achieve from Creative Commons are tools and copyright licenses that provide a simple method for creators of images to keep their copyright license while letting others use their work.

This makes using creative, scientific and educational content much easier to use on an Internet platform. The content available from Creative Commons can be edited, remixed, copied and distributed while staying well within the boundaries of the copyright law.

The site is free and easy to use and enables the creators of images to share their work without the usual hassle of dealing with complicated licensing agreements.

Creative Commons has also used the expertise of worldwide experts to be sure that the licenses on the images they offer are legally and globally accepted.

One word of caution – when using the search feature of Creative Commons, don't assume that the results are under the umbrella of Creative Commons licensing agreements.

Always verify that by following the link provided by the image. Contact the copyright holder directly if you are confused about the licensing.

Some incredible and unique images can be found on this site and you can usually obtain license to use them if you mention the source from which they came.

- **Wiki Commons** – This is a public domain site that's connected to the popular Wikipedia, the go-to place to find information for just about anything. Wiki Commons contains various licensing agreements such as those from Creative Commons.

When you choose an image from Wiki Commons, you can be fairly sure that you can use or reproduce it, since it's also been used on Wikipedia. Each image on the site has an explanation of the exact permission you'll need to use it.

- **Free Stock Photo Archives** -- These sites offer photos that can be uploaded and are automatically set up for reuse permission. The photos are likely to be Creative Commons type of licensed photos that are easy to understand and very clear cut.

The free stock photo archives are wonderful alternatives to the subscription type of sites where you pay a subscription fee, but you may be restricted by how you use the images.

- **Library of Congress Prints and Photographs** – Historical images are especially good finds on this site and they tend to be of high quality. Be sure you check to find out if the images you want to use are in public domain. This information can be found in the image details.

The Library of Congress also has a catalog from which you can purchase photos. Some of the images have not yet been digitized, so also pay close attention to the details.

- **Flickr** – One of the most popular online site for sharing photos, Flickr boasts that over 5,000 photos are uploaded to its site every minute. Sharing photos has never been easier than when using this site.

You need to know that not all of the images on the site are public domain – many contain restrictions for their use. But, many have been granted a type of commons licensing that only requires that you use the name of the creator of the image in the description.

- **Royalty/Subscription** – Successful bloggers often use these types of sites to bring quality and a truly professional look to their sites. Some of the images may be

quite expensive, but if you're looking for quality and not the run-of-the-mill usual photo, this is the place to visit.

The incredible images found on these sites may be over the top of what you need for your site, but if you want to invest in an image that will give you the most bang for the buck, you can't do better than these.

- **Getty** – When nothing but the best will do for your site, Getty Images can certainly provide you with the best quality and the most exclusive images available on the 'net.

The types of images on this site include rights-managed (expensive and restricted in use) and royalty-free (the ones you'll want to use for the web). Standards for photos are extremely high on this site and if you want to pay to get the best, Getty Images should give you what you want.

- **Jupiter** – Images on the Jupiter site make up some of the most expensive you can find on the 'net. They also have one of the largest containment of stock photo images.

You can find royalty-free, CD collections and right's managed images out of the millions of images available on this site.

Any of the above image search methods can help you find ethical photos to use on your websites. If you pay attention to the permissions of the images, you should find more than enough that will fit your needs.

Know that it's unethical to simply grab an image you might want to use and plop it on your site. Honesty is the best policy when it comes to using images, so take your time and do it ethically.

Chapter 8

How to Use Stock Photography Effectively for Your Online Business

A photo can be a digital footprint that can drive traffic and set you up as an expert in your chosen niche. Blogs, websites, social media sites, sales letters, newsletters and a host of other ways exist for you to effectively use stock photography in your online business.

Many sites like Facebook and the RSS readers such as Flipboard use the images within our posts and that can be an important way to drive traffic and create our particular brands.

Using stock photos for your online image needs can bring creativity to your design and a professional way of setting up your site, blog page or anything else you may have to do online.

Now that you know the legal and professional ins and outs of using and choosing stock photography, it's time to learn how to use the images effectively in your online business.

This chapter of the guide for using stock photography in your online marketing business will show you how to use the many and varied free and copyrighted images in all areas of Internet marketing.

Using Photos for Your Website

Using photos when building your websites can blow away the competition if you choose the images wisely and place them effectively on the page. Most professional website designers know how to use images in creating an eye-catching website, but if you're attempting to build your own site, there are a few things you need to know about choosing and using them.

It's so easy now to embed an image in a website – and many marketers use too many photos and images which make their site look confusing and cluttered. More isn't best in this case – but good quality and relevant material is.

Jakob Nielsen, a popular and highly successful web designer says, "Users pay close attention to photos and other images that contain relevant information, but ignore fluffy pictures used to "jazz up" web pages."

Also, keep in mind that first-time visitors to your site are immediately turned off if the page is cluttered with senseless images and especially if it affects the flow of reading.

Using images effectively for the design of your website should include the following basic fundamentals:

- **Creates Interest** – If the image has emotional appeal (makes the viewer want it), has brand interest (the photo successfully fits your brand) and rational appeal (shows the advantages of the product), it's likely a good one for your site.
- **Sends the proper message** – If your image doesn't send the message you want to convey to your readers, it's likely not the one you should use.
- **Quality of the image** – The chosen image should be the correct size, composition, exposure and quality that you need for your site. If it takes away from the rest of your page, the image is likely not the one you should use.
- **Creates the desired user response** – Your image should help make the viewer relate to your product (or you) enough that he or she wants to purchase it.

The more detail the product images have, the better results will be. Details are the key here so that people will know exactly what they're getting and won't be turned off when the product they receive varies a bit from the one shown in the photo.

Don't simply decorate your web pages with photos. Be sure they're relevant to the subject matter and that it tells a story rather than just taking up room on the page.

Using Images for Your Blog

Studies indicate that pictures or images of real people are considered important to the viewer and the brain automatically chooses to study rather than ignore them.

A blog is somewhat personal, and as such should definitely feature a photo or caricature of yourself. It helps the reader or participant to bond with you and to trust what you're saying.

If your blog site is about your company or product, using other images that you might be able to find in stock photos is also an advantage to your blog site. The personal touch to making a blog site stand out goes a long way in making an otherwise bland and boring blog into one that people can relate to.

When you do decide to use your own photo or photos of people in your company or product, be sure to hire a professional photographer if you can. The cost will be well worth the extra quality you get from the photos.

As with your website, don't use "filler" images for the design of your blog. Non-relevant photos do the same for the blog as they do for a website – absolutely nothing.

When studies were made of various websites, they used "heat zones" to tell where the eye of the viewer went to first and where they lingered. The heat zones appeared red and then went to orange, yellow and so on in regards to how long the eye stayed on the subject.

When images that were relevant to the blog site or website were used in the design, the red clearly showed that the images were the first thing the viewer noticed. Otherwise the work you went to in choosing and placing the images was just a waste of space.

Using Images for Your Newsletter and Email Campaigns

Using images to send out to the world in your newsletter and email campaigns is one of the best ways to advertise your product or service. Images can even be turned into 'buttons' that the recipient can click on to order a product/service or to illustrate the nature of what you have to offer.

You may have thought that you would need a graphic designer to add buttons to the images and to place them correctly, but today there are plenty of ways that you can learn to do it yourself – quickly and easily.

And, you'll be ahead of the game because many marketers don't know how or haven't caught on to the fact that images are a great way to promote a site or product – or how to utilize them to their best advantage.

After you've paid for photos or taken time and effort to choose just the right ones, you'll want to use them to your maximum advantage. Using them in a newsletter or email can turn them from boring and textual to an eye-catching professional one that will keep the viewers on the page.

Photos can also be used as "teasers" in your emails and newsletters to let the viewer know what the text is going to be about – and, if the photo is interesting, you'll keep your reader interested in what the text is going to say.

Using Images on Social Media Sites

The modern use of images on social networking sites is moving so rapidly that it's difficult to keep up with the technology. Social media sites are no longer just a place to exchange photos of children and puppies, but have progressed to the point of

being able to successfully brand your name or product and drive traffic to your websites.

Social media innovation has gone to mobile-based communication, allowing you to reach millions rather than thousands of people at once – and all over the world.

If you look on the most popular social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and LinkedIn, you'll see that photos are likely the main part of the communication process.

Lately, a new algorithm has appeared in the rapidly expanding technology of using photos. It vastly improves the process of searching through volumes of photos based on the tags available in photos that are now posted to social networking sites.

The potential of this new algorithm could be used for mapping. As of now, the algorithm only uses the tag information on the photo, but later will likely move to using color, facial or pixel technology.

By tagging and choosing professional and eye-catching images on social media sites to promote yourself or your product/service, you could be reaching thousands more people than you are right now.

Using Images within Your Sales Letters

Sales letters can come alive when you use a little creativity with images. Just as in email and newsletter campaigns, sales letters need some oomph to make the visitors to the sales letter stay and read about what you have to offer.

That doesn't mean that you can choose any old image that you get from available stock photos. But, it does mean that you should have professional photos of anything you choose to further enhance the importance of this important sales tool.

When you place only a couple of prime images within your sales letter, it can turn into many more dollars in sales. Not only are images eye-catching, but they can also convey your honesty.

Purchasing a product online takes a different mindset than purchasing from a store in your neighborhood. When you're proud enough of your product or service to place images that they can relate to, that mindset can change to one that makes them trust you and want to form a business relationship with you.

As with other uses of images, you need to be sure that any you include in your sales copy reflects and complements the text – adding to the sales message rather than taking away from it.

For example, you don't want to use an image of two people shaking hands if you have a product such as essential oils. The images have to relate to the product or service and not be placed simply for decoration.

According to expert Internet marketers who create highly successful sales letters, there are three images that should be included in your letter:

1. **A photo of you** – Rather than being presumptuous, placing a photo of yourself in a sales letter tends to send the message that you stand behind your product or service and that it's so good that you're willing to personalize it by putting yourself out there.
2. **Images of customers** – Testimonials are often used within successful sales letters, and there's no better way to make them stand out than to include photos of the customers who wrote the testimonials.

Photos of satisfied customers restate the fact that the testimonials are true and not fake photos that you've thrown in for good measure. It can make you more trusted and the customers will feel more at ease.

It's simple to collect photos – simply ask for a photo you can use when the customer leaves a testimonial. The quality doesn't matter as much as the fact that future readers of the letter will know that others trust to purchase from you.

3. **Product photo** – The most important photo on your sales page, the product photo can make or break your sales letter. It's the photo that can close the sale or make the reader turn away.

When you're trying to sell to people who are used to being able to touch the product in a store, selling online can be an obstacle you'll need to overcome – and a photo can make all the difference.

If you're selling a service, a photo is still important because the photo should reflect your integrity and can make the recipient of the letter more comfortable with the service they're buying.

The key to using images in sales copy or letters is to make it as desirable as possible. Screenshots, diagrams and other images can also be used to spiff up your sales copy and make it more eye-catching.

Just remember that your sales letter reflects who you are. Each pixel on the screen of the sales page is important and will portray the true impression that visitors will have of you.

Bells and Whistles that Will Make Your Photos Sing

Photoshop editing tools and other means of enhancing your images are all available online – some cost and others are free to download. If you're not already tweaking images to make them better fit the content for your online business, you need to

know how to get the most mileage out of the photos you purchase or choose from the many online sites.

Photoshop – With Photoshop software you can add features to your images such as masks, transparency, layers, effects and layer styles. One of the reasons that so many marketers are enamored with Photoshop is that it's part of Creative Cloud, so you have access to the latest updates as soon as they appear.

Any snapshot or image that you download from one of the many royalty-free sites can give you plenty of options to fix and enhance the image with Photoshop's Express Editor.

Layer your photos with Adobe Camera Raw 8 by fixing images that may be blurred or distorted in some way and create vignettes that are perfect for use on a website or newsletter.

Also, use Photoshop's 3D painting feature that is much more responsive when painting on images or maps. 3D images can add depth and interest to any type of marketing campaign you choose.

There are so many more excellent features that Photoshop offers – and you can get a free trial to see how easy it is to use and see all the ways you can use it in your own marketing pursuits.

Constant Contact Email Marketing – Email marketing may be just what your online business needs to give it the jump start to true success. It works because it's at the exact place that your customers check on a constant basis.

You can get instant results with the images you use in your email messages over catalogs and other methods of advertising. Emails are so much more personal than anything else you might use.

When you sign up for Constant Contact Email Marketing, you'll also have access to PicMonkey, an image editing feature that can help you easily add the buttons, logos and any other images you choose to use.

See how easy it is to use images to add images and enhance them with buttons:

1. Upload the image you want to use.
2. Click on "customize" and then add the URL of the image you uploaded.
3. Log onto the PicMonkey feature and click on "Edit."
4. Choose a font that's amenable to the image you chose.
5. Change the image as you like.
6. Change the image into a "button" if you want so that it really stands out in your email.

Play with the PicMonkey tools and see how you can make an image into a magical happening on your website, sales page or newsletter.

There are many other bells and whistles that can enhance and make your online content sing. Find out all you can about various software and free downloadable applications that you can easily learn and use to take your online business to the next level.

Summary

As you've learned by reading this Ultimate Guide to Stock Photography for Internet Marketers, the use of images in your Internet marketing campaigns can change how your business is perceived by others – from amateurish to professional.

It's like having a beautiful pictorial book on your coffee table, and a dictionary. Which will your visitors choose to spend time looking through? When you use photos that complement the content on your site or that provide interest to your blog, sales or newsletters, more sales will likely occur.

Using the technology available today, you can crop, collage, transform into buttons and use with software such as PowerPoint and Constant Contact Email Marketing to get the exact modification you want to any image you choose.

Be sure to use images ethically. Find out which rights are available for the photo(s) you choose and don't just use an image you see and like before checking out the legal details.

Optimizing the images you use within your content can be great for SEO and to set up who you are and what you have to offer. Be sure to have fun with images and to choose those that inspire and that work with your particular audience.

Enjoy your photo search!