

# how to...

third avenue ltd.  
the worx  
16-24 underwood st.  
london  
n1 7jq

tel: 0207 336 7222  
www.third-  
avenue.co.uk  
library@third-  
avenue.co

## Choose a Photographer

This may seem obvious but the mantra that runs through this section is:

### **Not all photographers are the same**

Their work will vary enormously, both in their creative style and also because of the area in which they normally specialise. The idea that photographers will be equally adept at any subject is mistaken. Most photographers will specialise in an area and this will inform their own ideas of what is expected from them in a commission, as well as the fee they charge and the rights of license associated with that. This does not mean that they won't accept the type of work you offer them, but it may affect your chances of getting the results you want.

To help you make an informed decision here below are the most popular categories of photographers and the work you can expect from them.

### **High Street Wedding & Portrait Photography**

Expect pictures that have a tendency to be posed and formalised. They will prefer to use their own lighting, may well prefer medium to large format and may have a tendency to put technical know how above spontaneity.

Expect their day rate to be moderate. They will probably do their own processing & printing and will make more money through this than through the actual fee. Because of this you can expect them to enforce copyright, but with the emphasis on the reproduction of prints rather than on publishing rights.

### **Local Paper Photography**

This is obviously a good way to get pictures in the local paper. Their photographer will know what the editor wants in terms of style & content. However, the results may not be sufficient for the national magazines & newspapers, which you may want to reach.

Take a look at the pictures in the paper they work for, as the chances are they will produce work of the same nature. Are the pictures tabloid or broadsheet in style? Does the photographer have links with the magazines you want to reach and know the issues involved in the subject?

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Expect their fee to be quite low. Whatever you pay them will probably be on a job-to-job basis as opposed to their paper work and will be a useful addition to their daily income. They are also less likely to enforce copyright.

### **National Magazine & Newspaper Photography**

This is probably the most useful for getting coverage in the national public sector press. They should be familiar with the style of shot wanted and the quality of picture required.

However, many of these photographers regard the public sector as lacking in status and excitement and many will take work on an ad-hoc basis between other assignments. This is basically a legacy of unimaginative & parochial commissioning, which of course you won't be doing having read **How to...Commission Creatively** and Why. The general rule with any photographer is to use their skills appropriately.

The approximate fee for a single job for a public sector magazine is about £110 plus Expenses and the Rights on this are First Usage (see How to...Understand Copyright), which means that the photographer will be paid fees for any additional usage by the magazine after the initial assignment has been run. You should therefore expect the fee to be about half as much again for the PR use (i.e.; £160 & expenses) and remember to check the license of use, as most national photographers will put restrictions on the use of pictures.

### **Portrait & Fine Art Photography**

Useful if you want to blur styles and use this work editorially or if you have a subject matter that doesn't lend itself to photojournalism. This is all about style over content so check that the quality and the idea behind the shoot is what you want.

Fees and attitudes to copyright might vary enormously depending on whether the photographer regards himself or herself as an art or editorial photographer, but expect the photographer to have lined up other outlets for their work. (This can be an advantage to you as you may be able to trade off fees for access to venues and organisational work on your part.)